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SOME

IMPORTANT POINTS

OF

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY

Maintained and Defended;

IN SEVERAL

SERMONS

AND OTHER

DISCOURSES:

BY

GEORGE BULL, D.D.

Late Lord Biſhop of St. *Davids*.

To which is prefixed,

The Hiſtory of his LIFE, and of thoſe CONTROVERSIES in which he was Engaged.

By ROBERT NELSON, *Eſq*;

VOL. I.

LONDON: Printed by W. B. for RICHARD SMITH at the Sign of Biſhop *Beveridge*'s Head in *Pater-noſter-Row* near *Cheapſide*, and in *Exeter-Change* in the *Strand*. 1713.

32

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joyning, and in Exeter-Close in the Strand. 1713.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO

Mrs. ELEANOR DODDINGTON,
Wife to George Doddington *Esq*; *one of the late Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and Member of Parliament for the Burrough of* Bridgwater *in* Somersetshire.

MADAM,

THE Right Reverend Author of these Sermons and other Discourses having, upon all Occasions, express'd a very high Esteem for You,

not only as a Lady to whom he had the Happineſs to be nearly related, but as One whoſe Perſonal Virtues, and Eminent Qualifications called for a greater Share of his Regard, than even the neareſt Ties of Blood can of themſelves ever claim; I thought my ſelf obliged to give You as publick a Teſtimony of it as I could, by Dedicating them to Your Name.

And I am willing to perſuade my ſelf they will meet with a favourable Acceptance at Your Hands; ſince a Lady of Your diſtinguiſhing Senſe, and known Piety, cannot but approve of what was ſo ſeri-

ouſly intended for the Service of the Church, and the Honour of that Religion which You profeſs. For theſe (Madam) are the Ends to which his whole Endeavours and Studies were directed, and if He had not all the Succeſs therein which He himſelf might deſire, He had at leaſt the Satisfaction of having done whatever was in his Power, towards the Promotion of them.

But I muſt not farther enlarge on this Subject, how pleaſing ſoever it may be to me, as being conſcious to my ſelf that I am in many other reſpects than that of *Relation*,

unqualified for the Discharge of it. An abler Pen has undertaken it (I mean that worthy Gentleman's to whose great Care and Pains in this Edition I am so much indebted) and will in the *Life* do Justice to it.

I shall therefore no longer detain you from the Entertainment you will meet with in *That* and the following Sermons and other Discourses, than while I write my self,

MADAM,

Your most obedient Servant,

and most obliged Kinsman,

Robert Bull.

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And leſt I ſhould be exalted above Meaſure, through the abundance of the Revelations, there was given to me a Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan, to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted above Meaſure. For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me; and he ſaid unto me, my Grace is ſufficient for thee, for my Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs. Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in my Infirmities, that the Power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.

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HOSEA *Chap.* x. *Ver.* 12. the beginning of the Verſe.

Sow to your ſelves in Righteouſneſs, reap in Mercy.

IN the preceding Verſes of the Chapter, God ſharply reproves and ſeverely threatens *Iſrael* for their Wickedneſs, eſpecially their Idolatry. But

the good God always in Judgment remembring Mercy, to thoſe Reprehenſions and Menaces ſubjoyns here in my Text an Exhortation to Repentance and Amendment of Life, enforc'd with a gracious Promiſe of Mercy upon ſuch Repentance. *Sow to your ſelves in Righteouſneſs, reap in Mercy.* Which Words (not to ſpend time needleſly in any farther Preface) I ſhall firſt briefly explain, and then raiſe ſuch plain, practical, and uſeful Obſervations from them, as they naturally and without ſtraining afford.

Firſt for the Explanation of the Text. It is obvious to obſerve in general, that the Verſe out of which my Text is taken, contains an Exhortation to Repentance and a good Life, expreſſed under the Metaphors of Plowing and Sowing; and alſo a Promiſe of Mercy under anſwerable Metaphors of Rain upon the Seed ſown, and of reaping a joyful Harveſt. *Sow to your ſelves in Righteouſneſs, reap in Mercy: break up the fallow ground; for it is time to ſeek the Lord, 'till he come, and rain Righteouſneſs upon you.*

But I am concern'd at preſent to explain only the beginning of the Verſe, which I have pitch'd on for the Subject of my Diſcourſe at this time.

Sow to your ſelves in Righteouſneſs. The ſowing of Seed is a Metaphor us'd in Scripture, to ſignify the doing of thoſe moral Exerciſes and Works, by which (according as the Quality of them is, as they are good or bad) Men are to expect from God either Reward or Puniſhment. *To ſow in Righteouſneſs* therefore is nothing elſe but to live righteouſly, to do righteous Actions, that is, Works of Piety towards God, and of Juſtice and Charity towards our Neighbour. For Righteouſneſs here is not only juſt and righteous Dealing towards Men, but it is *virtus univerſalis, an univerſal Vertue*, containing in it all other Vertues. In this comprehenſive Senſe it is often taken in Scripture, as for Example, *Pſal.* xi. 7. *The righteous Lord loveth Righteouſneſs.* Prov. xi. 5, 6. *The Righteouſneſs of the Perfect ſhall direct his way, but the Wicked ſhall*

fall by his own Wickedneſs. The Righteouſneſs of the Upright ſhall deliver them; but Tranſgreſſors ſhall be taken in their own naughtineſs. Dan. xii. 3. *They that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs as the Stars for ever and ever.* Matth. v. 20. *Except your Righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And that in this large Senſe it is to be underſtood here, is evident, becauſe the Exhortation, *Sow in*, or *unto Righteouſneſs*, requires an univerſal Reformation, Converſion, and turning to God. It is a calling of the *Iſraelites* to a general Repentance, not only of their unjuſt Dealings, but of all thoſe other Sins with which God had before charged them. And beſides, to the Command, *Sow in Righteouſneſs*, is preſently added in the Verſe out of which my Text is taken, *break up the fallow Ground*; where by the *fallow Ground* is meant the unregenerate Heart, the Heart that is

void of Virtue, and over-run with Vice; as it is expreſly expounded, *Jer.* iv. 3, 4. *For thus ſaith the Lord to the Men of Judah and Jeruſalem, break up your fallow Ground, and ſow not among Thorns. Circumciſe your ſelves to the Lord, and take away the Foreſkins of your Heart*, &c. Now to break or plow up the fallow Ground of our Hearts, is by the Exerciſes of Mortification to ſubdue and root up our vicious Inclinations, that ſo our Hearts may be made fit Soil, and prepared to receive the Seeds of Vertue. The ſowing therefore in Righteouſneſs here commanded, is of a wider Extent than to be confin'd only to Works of Juſtice, ſtrictly ſo called, and ſignifies the Practice of all Virtues, for which our Hearts, being cultivated by the fore-mentioned Exerciſes, are fitted and diſpoſed.

Reap in Mercy. Where *Grotius* and others note that in the Scripture Language *Seminare eſt benè agere, metere referre mercedem, To ſow is to do well, to reap is to receive the Reward of ſo doing.*

The Words, though they are deliver'd imperatively, yet are a plain Promiſe; as if it had been ſaid, *Sow in Righteouſneſs*, and then you ſhall *reap in Mercy*. For it is uſual in Scripture for the divine Promiſes to be deliver'd in the Imperative Mood, to ſignify, that if that be done which God commands, his Promiſe is ſure and certain, and preſently perform'd: There remains no more to do, but, as it were, to put forth the Hand, and gather the Fruit, and receive the Effect of the Promiſe: To this purpoſe ſee *Iſai.* lv. 2. *Wherefore do you ſpend your Money for that which is not Bread? and your Labour for that which ſatisfyeth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your Soul delight itſelf in Fatneſs.*

To *reap in Mercy* is to receive the Reward of Righteouſneſs from the free and abundant Goodneſs and Mercy of God. Indeed ſome think, the Mercy here ſpoken of may be underſtood of human Mercy, or the Exerciſe of Mercy by Men to Men; and ſo that to *reap in*

Mercy

Mercy is to receive our Reward according to the Mercy we have ſhewn to others. This Interpretation (it is confeſſed) contains a ſound Truth, and is ſafe enough; but I chuſe rather to go with the Stream of the moſt learned Interpreters, who expound the Mercy here mention'd, of the divine Mercy, the Mercy of God, the Fountain from whence the Reward of all our Righteouſneſs flows. And certainly the virtue of human Mercy is comprehended under that univerſal Righteouſneſs mention'd in the former Clauſe, *Sow to your ſelves in Righteouſneſs*, and is part of the Duty of Man there enjoyn'd; but the Mercy here mention'd belongs to the Promiſe of Reward, or the reaping of the Fruit of that Righteouſneſs from God, and ſo is moſt fitly underſtood of the divine Mercy.

And this may ſuffice for the Explanation of my Text, the Senſe whereof now appears to be this: Do and practice the Works of Righteouſneſs, of Piety to God, and of Juſtice and Charity towards

Men, and you ſhall certainly receive the Reward of that Righteouſneſs from the Mercy of God, an abundant Reward, ſuitable to the infinite Goodneſs and Mercy of God that beſtows it. I now proceed to raiſe my Obſervations from the Text, which are theſe two:

Obſerv. 1. *We muſt not expect to reap in Mercy, unleſs we ſow in Righteouſneſs; that is, we muſt not hope for the gracious Reward which God hath promiſed, without the Practice of thoſe Works of Righteouſneſs, which God hath commanded.*

Obſerv. 2. *When we have ſown in Righteouſneſs, that is, done righteous Works, we muſt not plead any Merit of our own in having ſo done, but muſt look for the Reward of our Righteouſneſs only from the free Grace and Mercy of God.*

Of theſe in their Order: And firſt, of the firſt. *We muſt not expect to reap in Mercy, unleſs we ſow in Righteouſneſs*, &c. For the Order in my Text is to be obſerv'd; firſt, *ſow in Righteouſneſs*, and then (not before, or otherwiſe) *reap in Mercy.* It would be as abſurd

for

for a Man to expect that God's Mercy ſhould ſave him without Works of Righteouſneſs, as for the Husbandman to look for a Harveſt without ever plowing and ſowing his Ground. He were a mad Man in his Husbandry that ſhould do this, and he is no leſs infatuated in his Religion that doth the other. The ſame thing under the ſame Metaphor, St. *Paul* teacheth us, *Gal.* vi. 7, 8. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap. For he that ſoweth to the Fleſh, ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption; but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap Life everlaſting.* Which great Truth the Scripture delivers in proper Terms, when it tells us (as it often doth) that God will *render to, or reward every Man according to his Works. Without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*, ſaith the divine Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, *Ch.* xii. *ver.* 14. Without a holy Life here, no Man ought to expect or hope for a happy Life hereafter.

God

God indeed is infinitely good and merciful, and 'tis out of that infinite Goodneſs and Mercy, that he beſtows the Gift of eternal Life upon any Man; but God is alſo infinitely wiſe, and righteous, and holy; and therefore he will not (I think I may ſay he cannot) confer the rich Donative upon any unholy or unrighteous Perſon. St. *Paul* ſeems to count it ſtrange, that any Chriſtian, any Man that hath been taught the Truth, as it is in Jeſus, ſhould either not know, or not believe, or not conſider this. For thus he beſpeaks his *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. *Know ye not, that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God:* As if he had ſaid, Is it poſſible you ſhould be ignorant of ſo great a Truth as this, ſo often and ſo plainly taught you by the Goſpel of Chriſt? Certainly

if

if you know not this, you know nothing in Chriſtianity. And yet alas! in this our Age, how many among thoſe that call themſelves Chriſtians, ſeem to be wholly ignorant of this great fundamental Principle of our Religion? A Principle more fundamental (if I may ſo ſpeak) than any Article of our Creed; for all thoſe Articles are fundamental only in order to this; that is, they are neceſſary to be believ'd, becauſe they have an Influence upon our Practices; and without the Belief of them we cannot reaſonably live a Chriſtian Life. They therefore that are ignorant of, or disbelieve the Neceſſity of a holy Life, are ignorant of, or deny that Article, upon the Suppoſition of which the Neceſſity of all other Articles of our Religion depends. He indeed that thinks himſelf not oblig'd by the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, as expounded by our Saviour Chriſt, may at the ſame time as reaſonably throw away his whole Creed. For if it be not neceſſary to live according to the Precepts of Chriſt, it cannot be neceſſary

to

to believe any Propoſition or Doctrine in Chriſtianity. If there be no Danger in an ill Life, there can be no Danger in a wrong Belief. And yet, I ſay, how many are there among thoſe, on whom the Name of Chriſt is called, and who glory in that Name, who ſeem not yet convinc'd or perſuaded of this great and manifeſt Article? 'Tis a ſad Truth, (but a Truth it is) that the very Principles of Chriſtianity are perverted and corrupted by the profeſſed Diſciples of that Religion, yea (which is yet worſe) by the very Doctors and Teachers of it too. And here

Iliacos intra muros peccatur, & extra.

Proteſtants and Papiſts are both to blame.

To begin with our ſelves firſt. Among us Proteſtants there have been many (too too many) that have taught for pure, yea the pureſt Goſpel, ſuch Doctrines as theſe: "That the Faith whereby we are "juſtified, is nothing elſe but a Recum-"bence, or Reliance upon Chriſt, or

"(which

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" ſort) Works of Supererrogation, to " which no Neceſſity obligeth us, but " only gratitude freely enclines us." The Men that taught theſe ſad Propoſitions were called *Antinomians*; whoſe Name indeed is now every where odious and decryed; but the Doctrines themſelves have taken ſuch deep Root in the Hearts of the People, (who greedily entertain'd them, as grateful and pleaſing to their carnal Appetites) that Multitudes ſtill periſh upon the Confidence of the ſame Principles. And there being ſome obſcurer Places of Holy Writ, that ſeem to ſound this way, and to favour the forementioned Errors, they pertinaciouſly adhere to them; though there be five hundred Texts of Scripture, that in the moſt expreſs and plaineſt Terms teach the contrary. Yet (God be thanked) I know of no Proteſtant Church of any Denomination whatſoever, that openly avoucheth any of thoſe Doctrines. I am ſure, our Church of *England* is far from doing ſo: They are the Errors or Hereſies, rather of certain, private and unlicenſed

Doctors,

Doctors, who took occaſion to ſow their Tares, not when our Watchmen ſlept, but when they were by a tyrannical Power ſilenc'd, and driven from their Charges in the time of Uſurpation. And the ſame Men (when they are now not only not-licenc'd, but themſelves forbidden to preach) are the only Men that ſtill maintain and ſtrenuouſly propagate thoſe pernicious Doctrines in their ſchiſmatical Aſſemblies.

But having done this Juſtice to our ſelves, let us next call the Papiſts to account. The Church of *Rome*, I ſay, the very Church of *Rome*, teacheth and avoweth ſuch Doctrine, as evidently and utterly deſtroys the Neceſſity of a holy Life, and encourageth Men to hope they ſhall *reap in Mercy*, though they *ſow* not to themſelves *in Righteouſneſs*. Such is that Doctrine of theirs, "That "a Man by Attrition, or ſuch a Sorrow "for Sin, as ariſeth only from Fear, and "is void of Charity and the Love of "God above all things, with the help "of the Sacrament of Penance, that is,

"of

" of Confeſſion to and Abſolution from " a Prieſt, may obtain the Pardon of his " Sins, Juſtification, and eternal Life." This dangerous Propoſition the *Council* of *Trent* doth plainly enough aſſert, in the fourth Chapter of the fourteenth Seſſion, *Concerning Contrition.* But in the *Roman Catechiſm* (which was allow'd and publiſh'd by the Order of the *Trent* Fathers, and Pope *Pius* the Fifth, and is therefore as much their Doctrine as any thing decreed by them in their Seſſions) it is ſo manifeſtly deliver'd that there is no room for Contradiction, in the fifth Chapter of the ſecond part of *The Sacrament of Penance* [*Page* 223, and the following, according to the Edition of *Antwerp* 1606.] The Sum of their Doctrine there is plainly this, " That " true Contrition, joyn'd with the Love " of God above all things, is indeed a " thing very deſirable, and moſt accep- " table to God, even without the Sa- " crament of Penance: But becauſe very " few have this true Contrition, that " therefore God out of his infinite

Mercy

Mercy and Indulgence, *hath provided for the common Salvation of Men in a more easy way.* They are the very words of the Catechism, wherein the Fathers seem to have forgotten the words of our Saviour, *Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it*, Matth. vii. *ver.* 14. And that therefore he hath appointed the Sacrament of Penance, as a Help or Crutch to a lame and defective Repentance, as a Supply to their Contrition and Sorrow for Sin, wherein the Love of God above all things is wanting.

Need I now to shew the Danger of this Doctrine? It is indeed a Doctrine so dangerous, so damnable, that it seems of it self sufficient to unchristian, and unchurch any Society of Men that shall teach and maintain it. It razeth the very Foundations of the Gospel: It takes away those two great Hinges, upon which (as our Saviour himself tells us) all the Law and Prophets depend and turn, *viz.* The Love of God above all things, and of our Neighbours as our

ſelves, for God's ſake. For theſe, according to this Doctrine, are not neceſſary: The rare Device of the Sacrament of Penance, can reconcile Men to God without them; and by this Expedient, Men that never loved God with all their Hearts, in all their Days on Earth, may for ever enjoy God in Heaven. People may expiate their Sins at this rate of a ſervile Attrition, *toties quoties*, as often as they commit them, and ſo be ſav'd without ever having lov'd God above all things in their Lives. But the Danger of this Doctrine will more evidently appear, if we apply it to ſuch as are *in agone mortis*, at the Point of Death. Suppoſe a Man to have liv'd in a Courſe of Wickedneſs for fifty or ſixty Years, and being now upon his Death-bed, to be attrite for his Sins, that is, heartily to grieve for them only out of the Fear of Hell (and he is a bold Man indeed that will not in earneſt fear Hell, when it gapes upon him, and is ready to devour him) and in that Fear to purpoſe Amendment of Life, if God reſtore him,

him, and to have a Hope of Pardon; (and in ſo comfortable a Church as the *Roman*, who hath any reaſon to deſpair?) this Man according to the Doctrine of the Council of *Trent*, tho' he cannot be ſav'd without the Sacrament of Penance, yet with it he may.

If he hath but Breath enough to tell the Prieſt the ſad Story of his vicious Life, and beg Abſolution, he can do Wonders for him, more than God himſelf ever promiſed: He can by pronouncing only a few Words over him, preſently tranſlate him from Death to Life; and make *him*, that was all his Life before a Child of the Devil, in one Moment the Son of God, and an Heir of Salvation.

Let not therefore the Church of *Rome* boaſt any more of the Strictneſs and Severity of her Doctrine; and that ſhe eſpecially preſſeth good Works, and the Neceſſity of a holy Life: When it is apparent, that by ſuch looſe Propoſitions as theſe, ſhe utterly deſtroys that Neceſſity. Indeed it may be truly affirm'd, that there is no Society of Chri-

ſtians in the World, where *Antinomianiſm* and *Libertiniſm* more reign, than among the Papiſts, into whoſe very Faith they are interwoven, and Men are taught them by the Definitions of their Church. 'Tis no wonder ſo many vicious Perſons, eſpecially when they come to dye, turn Papiſts, and no Viſitants are ſo welcome to them as the *Roman* Confeſſors. They find them very eaſy and comfortable Doctors for Men in their deſperate Caſe, and admire their rare Invention, who have found out a ſhorter Way to Heaven, and a readier one to eſcape Hell and Damnation, than the Scriptures ever diſcovered, or their former Miniſters of the Church of *England*, following the Guidance of the Scriptures, durſt warrant to them. And what broken Plank, yea what Flag or Reed will not a drowning Man lay hold on? O how pleaſant a thing is that which they call the Boſom of the *Roman* Church? How willingly do thoſe forlorn Wretches caſt themſelves into it? Where they are promiſed, and in their own deluded

Imaginations enjoy that reſt and Security, which they could not any where elſe, no not in the Word and Promiſes of God, find. But alas! when they thus ſay Peace, Peace unto themſelves, behold! ſudden Deſtruction cometh upon them, and within a Minute after they are lanch'd out into Eternity, a ſad and dreadful Experience convinceth them what a ſorry Refuge they fled to.

It is evident, that the Church of *Rome*, in teaching this vile Doctrine, aims only at her own Intereſt and Advantage, and hath no Regard at all to the Honour of God, and the Good of Souls. It is abſolutely neceſſary, ſhe ſaith, for a Sinner to make an auricular Confeſſion to, and be abſolv'd by a Prieſt, tho' God hath no where ſaid ſo: But it is not neceſſary for him to be contrite, or to repent of his Sins out of the Love of God, tho' God himſelf in his own Word, hath an hundred times ſaid it is. That is neceſſary for the Honour and Gain of the Prieſt. The Trade of auricular Confeſſion muſt by any

means be kept up, becauſe from thence they reap no ſmall Gain; and beſides by it they govern not only the ſilly common People, but great Men, and Kings and Princes, by becoming Maſters of their Secrets. But is not the Doctrine of true Contrition as neceſſary for the Honour of God? Yes; but the promoting of God's Glory in the Salvation of Souls, is the leaſt of their Deſign or Buſineſs. Indeed it were eaſy to ſhew how the whole Frame of the Religion and Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, as it is diſtinguiſh'd from that Chriſtianity which we hold in common with them, is evidently deſign'd and contriv'd to ſerve the Intereſt and Profit of them that rule that Church, by the Diſſervices, yea and Ruin of thoſe Souls that are under their Government.

What can the Doctrine of Mens playing an After-game for their Salvation in Purgatory be deſign'd for, but to inhaunce the Price of the Prieſt's Maſſes and Dirges for the Dead? Why muſt a ſolitary Maſs, bought for a Piece of Money,

Money, perform'd and participated by a Prieſt alone, in a private Corner of a Church, be, not only againſt the Senſe of Scripture and the Primitive Church, but alſo againſt common Senſe and Grammar, call'd a Communion, and be accounted uſeful to him that buys it, tho' he never himſelf receive the Sacrament, or but once a Year; but for this reaſon, that there is great Gain, but no Godlineſs at all in this Doctrine? Why in their publick Euchariſts muſt the Prieſt only receive in both kinds, and the People be put off with a Piece of a Sacrament, againſt the plaineſt Texts of Scripture, and the Practice of the Catholick Church, for at leaſt a thouſand Years after Chriſt (as ſome of the *Romaniſts* themſelves have confeſſed) but that this tends to the Advancement of the Honour and Eſtimation of the Prieſt, as being alone qualify'd to offer up an entire Sacrifice of Chriſt's Body and Blood? The ſacrilegious Practice indeed came in firſt upon the Pretence of the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation; but Intereſt after-

wards confirm'd the Practice. Nay their very monſtrous Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, tho' it ſeems to be fallen on by Chance, in a moſt ignorant Age, evidently ſerves the ſame Deſign.

Again, To what Purpoſe is there feign'd a Treaſury of the Merits of Saints in the Church of *Rome*, and that under the Pope's Lock and Key, but to fill his Treaſury with Money? And who hath not heard of their Indulgences of Pardon to the greateſt Sins and Sinners openly ſet to Sale, and made a Trade of? I might purſue the Argument farther, if time wou'd permit; but this is ſufficient to ſhew, by the way, that Gain, not Godlineſs, is the Deſign of the *Roman* Church, yea that their Gain is their Godlineſs, as St. *Paul* ſaid of ſome in his Time, 1. *Tim.* vi. *ver.* 5. And therefore that we are concerned to take heed to what follows in the ſame Place, *from ſuch withdraw*. Indeed Chriſtianity, the beſt of Religions, is, as they have taught it, truly become what one of their Popes is ſaid to have call'd it, only a gain-

a gainful Fable. But I return thither, from whence I have ſomewhat digreſſed.

The Church of *Rome*, I ſay, falſly glories in her being zealous for good Works; ſeeing, as it appears, ſhe evidently and many ways deſtroys the Neceſſity of them. And yet very many among us are ſo fooliſh, as to believe the Pretence; yea, and to make the preaching up of good Works a Character of a Papiſt. He is a Papiſt, ſay they, for he preſſeth good Works; and hence they themſelves ſit down in an openly vicious, or a careleſs Converſation, in a Life either fruitful of wicked Works, or barren of good ones; pleaſing themſelves with I know not what Faith, and eſteeming themſelves the trueſt Proteſtants in ſo doing. But what an Honour do they hereby do the Papiſts? What a Slur do they caſt on the reformed Churches? To undeceive theſe Men in this grand Miſtake, let me inform them of this one thing; that the Papiſts are indeed mighty zealous for external Works, and Works of their own deviſing,

ſing, but the moſt regardleſs Men in the World of thoſe ſubſtantial and truly good Works, which God hath commanded. They vehemently urge People to their Beads, and the repeating of *Ave Mary*'s and *Pater Noſter*'s, to external Abſtinences and Penances, (if they find them apt to receive their Diſcipline) to Pilgrimages and Offerings at the Shrines of Saints, to the Endowment of Monaſteries and religious Houſes, as they call them, to a Multitude of ſuperſtitious Fopperies and Ceremonies, that require ſo much Time and Care for their Performance, as to eat out the very Heart and Life of true Piety. And thoſe that will do this Drudgery of theirs (and what will not Men do to be freed from the hard Task of inward Piety?) they can eaſily excuſe from the truly good and eſſential Works of Religion, yea and perſuade them to a Preſumption of meriting Heaven, tho' in the mean while they are apparently Men of unmortify'd Affections and vicious Lives; eſpecially if they are zealous for the Catholick Cauſe, and a-

gainſt

gainſt thoſe whom they are pleas'd to call Hereticks. Nay if they have this Zeal, they will forgive them all the reſt. This Zeal ſhall be a fiery Chariot, to convey even the Murderers of their Princes, with *Elias*, to Heaven; and make them canoniz'd for Saints, and give them a Name in the *Roman* Calendar, as red as the Blood they have ſpilt. 'Tis true, ſome good Men there are in the Papacy, and as well as they can, declaring againſt this wretched Corruption of Chriſtianity among them. But the common, current, ruling and prevailing Religion of the Church of *Rome*, is certainly ſuch as I have deſcrib'd.

But now the true reformed Religion (I am ſure that of the Church of *England*) teacheth Men the neceſſity of Works truly good, of true Contrition for their Sins, of mortifying their ſinful and carnal Affections, of all the ſubſtantial Works of Piety, Juſtice and Charity. It teacheth Men not to expect Heaven and Salvation without theſe; but yet not to think of meriting Heaven by them. It plainly teacheth,

teacheth, that for a Man to be a Proteſtant againſt Popery, will not ſerve his Turn, unleſs he equally proteſt againſt the Sin and Wickedneſs of the World: That to be a Member, by Profeſſion, of a reformed Church, will not ſave his Soul, unleſs himſelf be truly reform'd in his Life and Converſation. And if Men after all this live vicious Lives, as too too many among us do, they have not the leaſt Countenance from the Doctrine of the Church wherein they live, but are continually under her ſevere Reprehenſions and Reproofs, and are not ſuffer'd to live quietly in their Sins; ſo that if they periſh, 'tis purely their own Fault and Folly.

To conclude this Matter, it is a very difficult Task for Men to perſuade themſelves to deny all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly, in this preſent World, tho' they are rightly princip'l'd, and convinc'd of the Neceſſity of ſo doing. What a Caſe then are they in, whoſe very Principles lead them to a vicious Life; whoſe

whoſe very Minds, Underſtandings and Notions of things, are corrupted; who are not yet convinced of the Neceſſity of a holy Life? *If the Light within thee be Darkneſs*, ſaith our bleſſed Lord, *how great is that Darkneſs?* Matth. vi. *v.* 23. It is impoſſible for Men of ſuch ill Principles to live well, unleſs either their Underſtandings be ſo weak, as not to diſcern their Conſequences, (and then their Weakneſs is their Happineſs) or elſe a very ſtrong Inclination to Virtue, and a mighty Grace in them, conquer and overcome the Venom and Poiſon of them.

Wherefore, my dear Brethren, let no Man deceive you with vain Words, but hearken to the Word of God, which tells you, that you muſt not expect to *reap in Mercy*, unleſs you *ſow to your ſelves in Righteouſneſs*. Let never either Jeſuit or Fanatick perſuade you to the contrary. Fix and ſettle in your Minds ſuch plain Texts of Scripture as theſe. *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh.* Luke xiii. *ver.* 3. *Follow Peace and Holi-*

neſs,

neſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord. Heb. xii. *ver.* 14. *God will render to every Man according to his Deeds; to them, who by patient Continuance in Well-doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh upon every Soul of Man that doth evil,* &c. *but Glory, Honour and Peace to every one that worketh good. For there is no Reſpect of perſons with God.* Rom. ii. *ver.* 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Fix, I ſay, and ſettle theſe and ſuch like Places of holy Scripture in your Minds and Memories, and let no Sophiſtry of Men or Devils ever baffle or diſſuade you from ſo plain a Truth. Nay, let not your own Hearts deceive you, as they will be apt to do, either by cauſing you to divert your Thoughts from theſe expreſs Declarations of God's Will, or to ſeek out Shifts and Evaſions to elude them. But often call to Mind, meditate and think on theſe Scriptures. Let them continually haunt

haunt your Souls, (if I may ſo ſpeak) and never ſuffer you to be at reſt, 'till you have reſolv'd upon a holy Life, and engag'd your ſelves in it. And then happy, thrice happy ſhall you be; and after you have ſown to your ſelves in Righteouſneſs, a glorious Harveſt ſhall you reap from the Mercy of God. And this leads me to the ſecond Obſervation from my Text, which I ſhall briefly diſpatch, and ſo conclude.

Obſerv. 2. *When we have ſown in Righteouſneſs, that is, done righteous Works, we muſt not plead any Merit of our own in having ſo done; but muſt look for the Reward of our Righteouſneſs only from the free Grace and Mercy of God.*

Sow to your ſelves in Righteouſneſs, reap in Mercy. The Reward of the righteous Man is every where in Scripture pronounc'd to be a Reward of Grace and Mercy. The Words of the ſecond Commandment are obſervable, *Shewing Mercy unto thouſands of them that love me and keep my Commandments.* They that love God and keep his Commandments, all the

Reward they can hope for, is, that God ſhould ſhew *Mercy* unto them. And there is a great deal of Congruity, tho' they ſeem ſtrange, in the Words of *David*, *Pſal.* lxii. *ver.* 12. *Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth Mercy; for thou rendreſt to every Man according to his Work.* That God rendreth to every Man, that is every righteous Man, according to his Work, is an Act of his Mercy. *Nehemiah* Chap. 13. reckons up many great and noble Works that he had done for the Honour and Service of God; But that you may ſee he boaſted not in all this, that he had no Conceit of any Merit in himſelf, obſerve how humbly towards the Concluſion of the Chapter he ſupplicates for Mercy, and ſuch Mercy, as whereby God would ſpare him, that is, not puniſh him. *ver.* 22. *Remember me, O my God, concerning this alſo, and ſpare me according to the greatneſs of thy Mercy.* He counts it greatneſs of Mercy to be ſpar'd by God, after all his great good Works. In like manner St. *Paul*, after he had mention'd the frequent Acts of Charity

that

that *Oneſiphorus* had exercis'd towards him, prays, that God would reward them, in this Style. *The Lord grant unto him, that he may find Mercy of the Lord in that day.* 2 *Tim.* i. *ver.* 16, 17, 18.

There are two Reaſons ſuggeſted in the Text itſelf, that utterly deſtroy all Conceit of the Merit of our Righteouſneſs.

1. By our Righteouſneſs we give nothing to God; he reaps no Advantage from it to himſelf. If we ſow in Righteouſneſs, we ſow to our ſelves, and the Harveſt of this Righteouſneſs we our ſelves reap. *Sow to your ſelves, reap ye. My Goodneſs*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *extends not to thee, but to the Saints that are in the Earth*, Pſal. xvi. *ver.* 2. As if he had ſaid, I may and will do good to thy Saints, but I can do no good to thee; for I receive all the good I have, or do, from thee. Indeed if we are wicked, we hurt not God but our ſelves; and if we are righteous, the Benefit is to our ſelves, and not to him. Whatſoever we crawling Worms do here on Earth, God ſits ſtill upon the Circle of the Heavens,

the ſame perfect, unchangeable, bleſſed and happy God for ever and ever. Only he is pleas'd out of his infinite Condeſcenſion to look down from Heaven, upon thoſe little things we do here out of a hearty Deſire to glorify him; and in his abundant Mercy he will plentifully reward them. We may challenge all who lay ſuch Streſs upon Merit, to anſwer St. *Paul*'s Queſtion, *Who hath firſt given to him*, that is God, *and it ſhall be recompenced to him again?* Rom. xi. *ver.* 35.

2. The other Reaſon againſt all Merit of our good Works, ſuggeſted in the very Text, is this: There is no juſt Proportion between our Works of Righteouſneſs, and the Reward of them. Our good Works are but a few Seeds; but the Reward is a Harveſt. *Sow to your ſelves in Righteouſneſs, reap in Mercy.* The words in the *Hebrew* are emphatical, *reap* לפי חסד lephi cheſed *according to the meaſure of Mercy.* For *lephi* and *kephi* are in Scripture us'd to ſignify the Meaſure or Proportion of a thing. Thus

Exod.

Exod. xvi. 21. *Every Man gathered* לפי *lephi o kelo, according to the meaſure of his eating.* The Senſe therefore is: He that ſows in Righteouſneſs, ſhall reap and receive his Reward, not according to the ſmall Proportion of the Seeds of Righteouſneſs that he hath ſown, but according to the Meaſure of the divine Mercy and Goodneſs, which uſeth ſuperabundantly to remunerate Man's ſlender Performances. And accordingly the learned *Druſius* thus paraphraſeth the words; *in*, or according to, *Mercy*; *benigna, ac pleniore menſura, quàm ſeminâſtis, in a bountiful and fuller meaſure than you have ſown.* As in a good and plentiful Year, the Harveſt or Crop that is reap'd, vaſtly exceeds the Seed ſown, every Grain yielding many more; ſo and much more 'tis here. What poor ſlender Seeds of Righteouſneſs do we ſow! But O! the vaſt Crop and Harveſt of Glory that ſhall thro' the Mercy of God ſpring and riſe out of thoſe Seeds. It ſhall be ſo great,

that when we come to reap it, we our ſelves ſhall ſtand amaz'd at it.

To conclude therefore: He that hath ſown the Seeds of Righteouſneſs moſt plentifully, muſt look for his Harveſt of Glory only from the Mercy of God. He that is richeſt in good Works, muſt ſue for Heaven in the Quality of a poor worthleſs Creature, that needs infinite Mercy to bring him thither; Mercy to pardon his Sins antecedent to his good Works; Mercy to forgive the Sins and Defects in his Works; Mercy to advance his Works (being, tho' ſuppoſed never ſo perfect, yet finite and temporary) to the poſſibility of attaining an infinite and endleſs Reward. He muſt confeſs with St. *Paul*, that *Eternal Life is the Gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt*, Rom. vi. *v.* 23. That it is the rich Purchaſe of Chriſt's moſt precious Blood, by which alone a Covenant of eternal Life was eſtabliſhed upon the gracious Condition of *Faith working by Love*; that it was the Grace of the divine Spirit promis'd in the ſame Covenant, that prevented him, and co-

operated with him, and continually aſſiſted and follow'd him in all his good Works: And conſequently, that tho' his Crown of Glory be *a Crown of Righteouſneſs*, that is, of God's Righteouſneſs, whereby he is oblig'd to make good his own Covenant; yet that it is *a Crown of Mercy too*, becauſe that Covenant it ſelf was a Covenant of infinite Grace and Mercy.

And if the beſt of Men, after all the good Works they have done, or can do, need Mercy, infinite Mercy to ſave them; what a miſerable Condition are they in, who have no good Works at all to ſhew; but on the contrary, a large Catalogue of wicked Works, unrepented of, to account for? We may ſay in this ſenſe with St. *Peter*. *If the Righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear?* 1 Pet. iv. *ver.* 18. Certainly even the Mercy of God cannot ſave this Man, becauſe his Holineſs will not ſuffer him. For tho' our good Works are not required to make us capable of meriting Heaven; (that being impoſſible for us) yet they are abſolutely

ſary to make us fit Objects for infinite Mercy to beſtow Heaven on, or in the excellent words of St. *Paul*, *To make us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* Col. i. *ver.* 12.

To which Inheritance, God of his infinite Mercy bring us, thro' Jeſus Chriſt:

To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be given all Honour and Glory, Adoration and Worſhip, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

SER-

SERMON II.

That the Soul of Man ſubſiſts after Death, in a Place of Abode provided by God for it, till the Reſurrection.

Acts of the Apoſtles *Chap.* i. *Ver.* 25. the latter End of the Verſe.

That he might go to his own Place.

IN the Verſes before my Text, we have an Account of the Election of a new Apoſtle, in the room of the Apoſtate *Judas*, who by his Defection and miſerable Death conſequent thereon, had render'd the complete and myſteri-

ous Number of Apoſtles choſen by our Saviour, uneven, and made a Breach in that Jury of Witneſſes, that were to report and teſtify his Reſurrection. In this grand Affair they firſt make uſe of their beſt Judgment, by appointing two Perſons of the Number of the ſeventy Diſciples, *Barſabas* and *Matthias*; either of them, as they conceiv'd, fit for the Office, leaving it to their Lord and Maſter to determine, which of the two ſhould be the Man, and ſtand as an Apoſtle. This divine Determination they ſeek for by caſting of Lots, an ancient way of Deciſion in ſuch Caſes, us'd both in the Church of God, and among the Gentiles. But before they go to the Deciſion of this important Affair, they betake themſelves to their Prayers, that God would by his ſpecial Providence direct the Lot, and the Event was this, that the *Lot fell upon Matthias.*

The Office of the Perſon to be elected, is deſcrib'd in the Verſe out of which my Text is taken, to be λαβεῖν τ κλῆρον τ διακονίας ⁊ ἀποστολῆς, *to be made Partaker*

taker of the Miniſtry and Apoſtleſhip, that Miniſtry and Apoſtleſhip from which *Judas* fell; the ſad Event of whoſe Fall is ſaid to be this, that *he went to his own Place* or State, a Place and State fit for ſo vile a Miſcreant; that he fell from the higheſt Dignity to the greateſt Infelicity, from the Fellowſhip of the Apoſtles, to the Society of Devils. *That he may take part of this Miniſtry and Apoſtleſhip, from which Judas by Tranſgreſſion fell, that he might go to his own Place.*

Indeed ſome Difference hath been ſtarted about the words of my Text, whether they are to be referr'd to *Judas* mention'd immediately before, or to the new Apoſtle under Election. Our learned *Engliſh* Paraphraſt refers them to the latter, underſtanding that the new Apoſtle ſhould go and betake himſelf to his proper Place, Charge and Province in the Apoſtleſhip, the words *from which Judas by Trangreſſion fell*, being included in a Parentheſis. But this Interpretation, beſides that it departs from the generally received Senſe of ancient and

modern

modern Expoſitors, (which is Prejudice enough againſt it) is alſo many ways incommodious. For firſt it feigns a Parenthesis in the Text without any Reaſon at all. And then 'tis not ſo natural to refer the words to a Perſon mention'd at a diſtance in the Context, as to a Perſon nam'd juſt before. Laſtly, this Interpretation ſeems to ſuppoſe, that every Apoſtle had his diſtinct and proper Place and Province in the Apoſtleſhip, which is not true. For the Apoſtleſhip and every Part of it was common to every Apoſtle, who might do all the ſame things in any Place, that any other Apoſtle did. Sure I am, there was no ſuch Diſtribution of Provinces at the time of this Election; for then the Apoſtles executed the ſame Office all in the ſame Place and Country, among the Jews, to whom alone they were at firſt to preach the Goſpel of Chriſt. The Diſperſion of the Apoſtles into the ſeveral heathen Nations, as they themſelves ſaw convenient, was not till after the obſtinate Infidelity of the Jews gave Occaſion for it. This

Senſe

Senſe therefore, tho' foreign, yet is not ſo ſtrange as ſome have made it, who have accus'd the forementioned excellent Expoſitor of Singularity, and as being the firſt Author and Inventer of it. For the learned *Iſidore Clarius*, in his Notes on my Text, delivers the ſame Senſe, without expreſſing any the leaſt Diſlike of it. But yet, I ſay it is a Miſtake, and the common Interpretation is undoubtedly the right, that *Judas* having forſaken and betray'd his Lord and Maſter, brought himſelf to a moſt wretched End, (as is before in this Chapter related, *v.* 16, 17, 18.) and upon his Death went to his proper Place, the Place and State of loſt reprobate Spirits, and damned Souls, a Company with which he was far more fit to be number'd, than with the Apoſtles of Chriſt. And therefore the *Alexandrian* MS. of venerable Antiquity, reads here, [a] *to his due Place*, that is to the Place and State of Miſery which he had juſtly merited and deſerved by his Wickedneſs.

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[a] Εἰς ἴ τόπον ἴ ἴδιον.

Now

Now that this is the true Meaning of my Text, I ſhall farther demonſtrate, by ſhewing that the Phraſe, [b] *to go to one's own Place*, or [c] *to one's due or appointed Place*, was a known received Phraſe in the Apoſtolick Age, to ſignify a Man's going preſently after Death, into his proper Place and State, either of Happineſs or Miſery, according to the Life which he had before liv'd. *Polycarp* in his Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, towards the end of it, ſpeaking of the Apoſtles and other Martyrs of that Age, ſaith, [d] *That they are with the Lord, in their due Place.*

Clement Biſhop of *Rome*, of whom St. *Paul* makes very honourable Mention *Phil.* iv. *ver.* 3. and who was therefore ancienter than *Polycarp*, in his undoubted Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, uſeth the ſame Phraſe more than once to the ſame Purpoſe. For not far from the beginning of that Epiſtle, ſpeaking of the

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[b] Πορεύθῆναι εἰς τ̀ τόπον τ̀ ἴδιον.

[c] Εἰς τ̀ ὀφειλόμενον ὁι ὡρισμένον τόπον.

[d] Ὅτι εἰς τ̀ ὀφειλόμενον αὐτοις τόπον εἰσὶ πρὸς τῷ κυρίῳ.

glori-

glorious End of *St. Peter*, he ſaith, [e] *Thus having ſuffer'd Martyrdom, he went to his due Place of Glory.* The ſame *Clement*, preſently after in the ſame Epiſtle, ſpeaking of St. *Paul*'s Martyrdom, ſays, [f] *Thus he departed out of the World, and went to the holy Place.* So *Barnabas* (or whoſoever was the Author of that very ancient Epiſtle going under his Name) expreſſeth the happy Departure of good Men into the other World, by the Phraſe of [g] *going to their appointed Place.* But the Apoſtolical Biſhop of *Antioch*, *Ignatius*, in his Epiſtle to the *Magneſians*, not far from the beginning, ſpeaks fully home to our Purpoſe. [h] *There are two things together ſet before us, Life and Death, and every one ſhall go to his own Place.* Laſtly, *Irenæus* the Diſciple of *Polycarp*, ſpeaks in the ſame Language with his Maſter. For in his fifth Book, *Chap.* 31. he ſays, that the

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[e] Οὕτω μαρτυρήσας ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὸν ὀφειλόμενον τόπον τῆς δόξης.

[f] Οὕτως ἀπηλλάγη τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον τόπον ἐπορεύθη.

[g] Ὁδοποιεῖν εἰς τὸν ὡρισμένον τόπον.

[h] Ἐπίκειται τὰ δύο ὁμοῦ, ὅτε θάνατος καὶ ἡ ζωή, καὶ ἕκαστος εἰς τὸν ἴδιον τόπον μέλλει χωρεῖν.

Souls

Souls of the true Diſciples of Chriſt, preſently after Death, *abibunt in inviſibilem locum, definitum eis a Deo, & ibi uſque ad Reſurrectionem commorabuntur: Shall go into an inviſible Place, appointed them by God, and there ſhall tarry even until the Reſurrection.* Where the *definitus locus, the appointed Place*, was doubtleſs in *Greek* the ὡρισμένος τόπος of *Polycarp*, and the ſame with the δίκαιος τόπος *the due Place*, us'd by the *Alexandrian* MS. here in my Text, of the contrary State of *Judas*: All which Expreſſions ſignify the determin'd proper Place or State, to which all Souls preſently after Death, good or bad, accordingly go to. After ſo many clear and full Teſtimonies, I ſuppoſe no Man can yet be to ſeek, what is meant in my Text by *Judas* his going after his wretched Death, [1] *to his own Place.*

And having thus explain'd my Text, that I may not detain you too long only with a Criticiſm on the words, I ſhall

[1] Εἰς ἴδιον τόπον.

now

now proceed to raiſe ſome uſeful and profitable Obſervations from it, which ſhall be theſe two.

Obſerv. 1. *The Soul of Man ſubſiſts after Death, and when it is diſlodg'd from the Body, hath a Place of Abode provided by God for it, 'till the Reſurrection of the Body again.*

Obſerv. 2. *The Soul of every Man, preſently after Death, hath its proper Place and State allotted by God, of Happineſs or Miſery, according as the Man hath been good or bad in his paſt Life.*

Of theſe Propoſitions I ſhall diſcourſe in their Order; and the firſt of them will be as much as I ſhall be well able to diſpatch within the Compaſs of Time at preſent allotted me. *The Soul of Man ſubſiſts after Death*, &c. And this Propoſition I ſhall manage ſo, as to prove it chiefly by Teſtimonies of the holy Scripture, ſuppoſing that I am to deal with Men that acknowledge its divine Authority, (as having been many a time ſufficiently proved to them) and only queſtion, whether any ſuch Doctrine be

clearly delivered in it. Of which ſort are many profeſſed Chriſtians who believe a Reſurrection and a Life to come, and yet deny the diſtinct Subſiſtence of the Soul after the Death of the Body; and whilſt the Body remains in the ſtate of Death, that the Soul dyes and is extinguiſhed with the Body; and conſequently that the Reſurrection, which we Chriſtians profeſs to believe in our Creed, is of the whole Man both Soul and Body. Out of the abundance of Texts of Scripture, that refute this Error, I ſhall make choice of ſome few, that do it moſt clearly and expreſly.

And firſt even in the Old Teſtament, we have a full Teſtimony given to this Truth, that the Soul ſubſiſts after the Death of the Body, by *Solomon*, *Eccleſ.* xii. *ver.* 7. Where deſcribing Man's Death and Diſſolution, he ſaith: *Then ſhall the Duſt return to the Earth, as it was: and the Spirit ſhall return unto God, who gave it.* The plain and evident Senſe of which words is this. Whereas Man conſiſts of two Parts, Body and Soul, the Con-

Condition of theſe two, when a Man dyes, will be very different: For the Body being at firſt taken out of the Duſt of the Earth, and ſo of a corruptible Conſtitution, ſhall go back into the Earth again, and moulder into Duſt; but the Soul, as it is of another and more excellent Original, (as being at firſt inſpir'd immediately by God himſelf into the Body) ſhall not periſh with the Body, but return to that God, from whom it came; in whoſe hands it ſhall continue ſafe and inviolate, according to that of the Author of the Book of Wiſdom, *Chap. 3. ver. 1. But the Souls of the Righteous are in the Hands of God, and there ſhall no Torment touch them.* For *Solomon* ſeems to ſpeak of the End of Man according to God's firſt Intention and Ordination, which was, that the Soul of Man, after Death, ſhould go to God and the heavenly Beings; and not of the accidental Event of things, happening thro' Man's Sin and Wickedneſs, whereby it comes to paſs, that the Souls of many Men, when they dye, inſtead

of going to God, go to the Devil and the infernal Regions. Tho' it is true alſo, that the Spirit of every Man after Death, good or bad, in ſome Senſe goes to God, either as a Father, or as a Judge, to be kept ſomewhere under the Cuſtody of his Almighty Power, in order to the receiving of his final Sentence at the laſt Judgment, either of Happineſs or Miſery. And accordingly the wiſe Man a little after ſubjoins the Article of a future univerſal Judgment, *ver.* 13, 14.

But if any Man yet doubt, what *Solomon* intends here, by the Soul's returning to God, and not to the Earth with the Body, let him conſult the third Chapter of this Book of *Eccleſiaſtes*. Where he firſt declares his Thoughts of an impartial Judgment of God, that ſhall happen at a certain determinate time, both to the Righteous and the Wicked, according to their different Works and Actions, *ver.* 17. *I ſaid in mine heart, God ſhall judge the Righteous and the Wicked; for there is a time there for every purpoſe, and for every Work.* And then in the follow-

following Verſes to the End of the Chapter, he expreſſeth another Thought or Suggeſtion, that ſometime came into his Mind, oppoſite to the former; or rather he repreſents the Thought of the profane Perſon, *viz.* That there is no ſuch future Judgment, that Religion is a vain thing, that there is no Difference between the Soul of a Man and a Brute, but that they both periſh together with their Bodies; and conſequently, that it is a Man's beſt Courſe, freely to enjoy what this preſent Life affords him, and that it is a vain thing to expect any better Eſtate in another World. In which Diſcourſe he introduceth the *Epicurean* (if I may be allow'd ſo to call him by an Anticipation) thus deriding the Notion of the Soul's Immortality, *ver.* 21. *Who knoweth the Spirit of a Man that goeth upward, and the Spirit of the Beaſt that goeth downward to the Earth?* As if he had ſaid: As for the Talk of Man's Soul being immortal, who can demonſtrate that Problem? Who can diſcern any Sign of Difference betwixt the Soul of a Man and a

Brute, that ſhall prove that the one goes upward to the Region of permanent and eternal Beings, the other downwards, that is, periſheth together with its Body, that moulders in the Earth. Certainly hence it is moſt clear, that the Phraſe of *Man's Spirit going upward*, ſignifies, in *Solomon's* Senſe, ſomething directly oppoſite to the Condition of the Soul of a Beaſt, that dyes together with its Body; that is, that it ſignifies the Immortality of Man's Soul, and its Subſiſtence after the Death of the Body. Now what *Solomon* doth here in the beginning of this Book, queſtion in the Perſon of the *Epicurean*, whether the Spirit of Man when he dyes, doth thus go upward, he doth clearly in the Text before cited, towards the end of the ſame Book (where he expreſſeth his own moſt ſerious and reſolved Thoughts) peremptorily determine in theſe words. *Then ſhall the Duſt return to the Earth, and the Spirit ſhall return unto God who gave it.*

The Matter is plain and evident. The New Teſtament very often, and moſt expreſly

expreſly delivers the ſame Doctrine. Our Saviour *Mat.* 10. *ver.* 28. thus exhorts his Diſciples: *Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul: But rather fear him, which is able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell.* What can be more clear? If the Soul had ſuch a neceſſary Dependence on the Body, that when this dyes, it ſelf muſt needs dye with it; then he that kills the Body, would with the ſame Stroke murder the Soul too. But our Saviour tells us, that this is impoſſible for Man to do; the Soul remaining even after the Death of the Body, and being out of the Reach of any created Power, that is able to deſtroy it. If it be ſaid, that this is meant only of the utter Deſtruction of the Soul, which no Man is able to effect, God having promiſed a Reſurrection to Life again; this will appear to be only a wretched Shift, to avoid the Force of the plaineſt Text. For in this Senſe our Saviour might have as well deny'd, that it is in the Power of a Man to kill the Body of another Man, that

is, to deſtroy it utterly and finally, becauſe God will raiſe it again at the laſt Day. But our bleſſed Lord grants, that the Body may be kill'd by Man in the ſame Senſe, wherein he denies, that the Soul can be deſtroy'd by him; and therefore ſpeaks not this only with reference to the Reſurrection.

The ſame our bleſſed Saviour aſſures our Belief of this Truth by his own Example, when being at the Point of Death, he ſaid, *Father into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*, Luke xxiii. *ver.* 46.

He believ'd that he had a Spirit, a ſuperior Soul, that after the Death of his Body, and the Extinction of his animal Soul ſhould ſtill remain; and this he recommends to the gracious and ſafe Cuſtody of his Father. And leſt we ſhould think, that this was a peculiar Privilege of the Soul of the *Meſſias*; St. *Stephen* when dying, after the ſame manner commits his Spirit to Chriſt himſelf, then exalted at the right Hand of the Father, ſaying, *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit*, Acts vii. *ver.* 59.

Again,

Again, how expreſs are thoſe words of Chriſt to the penitent Thief on the Croſs; *Verily I ſay unto thee, to Day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe?* Luke xxiii. *ver.* 43. This certainly is a plain Promiſe to the Thief, that on the very ſame Day, wherein he dyed with Chriſt, his Soul (for his Body was to be taken down from the Croſs, and bury'd in the Earth) ſhould be with Chriſt in Paradiſe. His Soul therefore dyed not with his Body, but immediately after Death, went with Chriſt's Soul to Paradiſe, εἰς τὸν ἴδιον τόπον, *to the proper Place*, for ſo great and illuſtrious a Penitent. The Subterfuges and Shifts of Hereticks to evade this Text, are ſo perfectly ridiculous, that I muſt make my ſelf ridiculous, if I ſhould mention them, much more if I ſhould go about ſeriouſly to refute them.

Farther, we read expreſly in the New Teſtament of ſeparate Spirits of Men, both good and bad. Of the Spirits of good Men departed, the divine Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, ſpeaks, when he tells us, that we Chriſtians are

join'd not only to an innumerable Company of Angels, but alſo to the Society of *the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, or that have finiſhed their Courſe*, Heb. xii. *ver.* 23. Of the Spirits and Souls of wicked Men, remaining after Death, St. *Peter* as expreſly ſpeaks, 1 *Pet.* iii. *ver.* 19, 20. *By which alſo he went and preach'd to the Spirits in Priſon, which ſometimes were diſobedient, when the Long-ſuffering of God waited in the Days of Noah*, &c. How, and when Chriſt preach'd to thoſe Spirits in Priſon, is not my Buſineſs at preſent to enquire: But the Text plainly enough affirms, that the Spirits of thoſe wicked Men that were deſtroy'd by the Flood, were then in Being, and in Priſon too, that is, *in the ſad Place of Judas*, in the Place and State of miſerable Souls, reſerv'd, as in a Jayl or Dungeon, to the future Judgment and Execution.

St. *Paul* alſo moſt plainly teacheth, that a Man, (that is his Soul) may be abſent from his Body, and ſubſiſt without it, and in a State of Separation from it,

it, 2 *Cor.* v. 8, 9, 10. *We are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the Body, and to be preſent with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that whether preſent or abſent, we may be accepted of him. For we muſt all appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt*, &c. The ſame St. *Paul* ſpeaks of Viſions and Revelations that he had ſeen and received in Paradiſe and the third Heaven; but whether he ſaw thoſe Viſions in or out of his Body, he profeſſeth himſelf doubtful and uncertain, 2 *Cor.* xii. *ver.* 2, 3. *I knew a Man in Chriſt above fourteen Years ago (whether in the Body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the Body, I cannot tell, God knoweth) ſuch an one caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew ſuch a Man, (whether in the Body, or out of the Body, I cannot tell, God knoweth) How that he was caught up into Paradiſe, and heard unſpeakable words, which it is not lawful for a Man to utter.* If the Apoſtle had believ'd the vain Philoſophy of ſome Men, that a Man's Soul cannot ſubſiſt without his Body, he might very eaſily

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and moſt certainly have reſolv'd his own Doubt, and concluded that he receiv'd thoſe Viſions and Revelations in the Body, ſeeing out of the Body he could not ſo much as ſubſiſt.

But not to purſue any farther thoſe particular Texts of Scripture, that occaſionally (and as it were by the by) dropt from the Pens of the ſacred Writers, let us enquire into the whole State of the Queſtion concerning the Soul's Immortality and Permanence after Death, as it was controverted between the two great Sects among the *Jews*, the *Sadducees* and *Phariſees*, in our Saviour's time, and as it was by the Apoſtles of Chriſt and by Chriſt himſelf profeſſedly determin'd.

The Dogmata and Tenets of the *Sadducees*, oppoſite to the Doctrine of the ancient Church of the *Jews*, held by the *Phariſees*, are very briefly, yet fully enough expreſs'd by St. *Luke*, *Acts* xxiii. *ver.* 8. *For the Sadducees ſay there is no Reſurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit; but the Phariſees confeſs both.* The *Sadducees* believ'd that there is a God, tho'

whether

whether they believ'd God himſelf to be incorporeal, is not without very great Reaſons queſtion'd by ſome. But this is certain, that beſides God, they believ'd nothing at all to ſubſiſt, but what is perceptible to Senſe. And hence they deny'd Angels to be permanent Subſtances, believing the Angels of which they had read in Scripture, to be only certain Phantaſms, occaſionally form'd by God, when he would at any time reveal his Will to the Sons of Men, and afterwards vaniſhing and diſappearing. And agreably to the ſame Hypotheſis, they deny'd alſo any ſuch Beings as the Spirits of Men, diſtinct Subſtances from their Bodies, and able to ſubſiſt without them. And hence farther, by a neceſſary Chain of Conſequences, they deny'd the Reſurrection of the Bodies of Men after Death. For to what purpoſe ſhould the Body of Man ariſe, if there were no Soul in Being, to which it ſhould be re-united, and by which it ſhould be again inform'd? And how could the ſame Man at the Reſurrection receive the Reward of his paſt

Actions

Actions, as the *Phariſees* rightly taught, if his Soul did not ſubſiſt after Death? For every Man hath his Individuation chiefly from his Soul; and *animus cujuſque eſt quiſque, the Soul of every Man is the Man.* If therefore the Soul of Man it ſelf be extinguiſhed by Death, at the raiſing of our Duſt, a new Soul muſt be produced by God for every Man, and ſo every Man would be another Man, and the ſame Men could not receive the Rewards and Puniſhments of the World to come, due to their reſpective Actions done in this Life, which is the only ſuppoſed End of the Reſurrection. This a learned Man more ſcholaſtically expreſſeth in theſe words. "If the Soul be not a "permanent Subſtance, but only a Qua- "lity or Craſis, which, when the Body "dyes, periſheth and is extinguiſhed with "it, it is impoſſible that the ſame nume- "rical Man ſhould riſe after Death; "becauſe the Form or Soul which peri- "ſhed, cannot be numerically the ſame "with the Form or Soul which is re- "ſtor'd. For this is numerically ano-

"ther

"ther, becauſe between that which "periſhed, and this which is reſtor'd, "there intervened *Nihilum, a Non-entity.* "Now whenſoever between two Ex-"tremes, a *Medium* of a divers kind is "interpos'd, thoſe two cannot be nu-"merically the ſame, tho' they may "be the ſame ſpecifically. For that is "numerically one, which is contain'd "in one common Term; as that is one "Line which is not cut off or interrup-"ted, and that one Motion, which is "not diſcontinued by Reſt. But there "is no common Term between that "which once was and periſhed, and "that which afterwards is produc'd; for "Non-exiſtence came between them, "and therefore they cannot be nume-"rically the ſame." Vain therefore would be the Expectation of good Men, becauſe they themſelves ſhould not be rewarded in the Reſurrection, but others for them.

To this I add, that as a Reſurrection cannot rightly be defended, unleſs we aſſert the Permanence and Subſiſtence of

Man's Soul after Death; So this being acknowledg'd, a neceſſity of the Reſurrection of his Body plainly follows. In order to the Demonſtration whereof, we are in the firſt Place to obſerve, that the Body is not in Man a thing adventitious or ſuperinduced, a thing which at firſt he was without, and afterward was inveſted with; (a Dream of thoſe Men, who hold a Pre-exiſtence of Souls or ſpiritual Beings, afterward, for ſome Fault committed in their primitive State, thruſt down into Bodies, as into Priſons) but it is an eſſential part of Man. Tho' the Soul be the principal, and by far the moſt excellent part, (as I have ſaid before) yet the Body too is one conſtitutive Part of that *Compoſitum*, that compounded thing which we call Man. For the ſacred Oracles teach us, that the Body of Man was a thing made by God in the very firſt Creation and Conſtitution of Man; nay, that the Body was made before the Soul, *God firſt forming Man out of the Duſt of the Earth, and then breathing into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life, ſo that*

Man

Man became a living Soul, Gen. ii. *ver.* 7. That is, that which was taken out of the Earth, and that which was from without breath'd by God into it, made in the whole one living Man; the Soul being here put for the whole Man, as often otherwhere in the holy Scriptures. And the Apoſtle plainly tells us, that the Body, as well as the Soul and Spirit, belongs to the ὁλόκληρον *the whole* of Man, that whole, which he prays may be preſerved *blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus*, that is, to the Day of Judgment, 1 *Theſſ.* v. *ver.* 23. This being eſtabliſhed, we thus argue. Seeing the Soul of Man is permanent, and ſubſiſts after the Death of the Body, and yet the Body alſo belongs eſſentially to the Conſtitution of Man; when that Body is defunct, either the Soul muſt remain perpetually in a State of Separation, and as it were, of Widowhood, or the Body muſt be recall'd to Life, and again united to it.

The former Hypotheſis agrees not to Reaſon. For ſeeing the Soul alone doth not conſtitute human Nature, that Being

which we call Man, if the Body utterly periſh'd, would for ever remain as it were an half Man, and be deſtitute of a part of himſelf. And indeed that he ſhould be ſo by Diſpenſation, and for a certain Time, and for certain Cauſes, is not abſurd; but that he ſhould continue ſo for ever, ſeems repugnant to the order of things eſtabliſhed by the divine Wiſdom. In a word, if Man had not ſinn'd, the Union between his Soul and Body, ſhould have been uninterrupted and perpetual, that is, if he had never ſinn'd, he ſhould never have dy'd; but by Sin came Death, which diſſolved the Union. Yet by the Grace of a new Covenant in Chriſt, that Death becomes not perpetual, and Man receives a ſecond Promiſe of Immortality. In order to which, tho' his Body remain for a while under Death, (an irreverſible Decree being paſt, that Man ſhould return to the Duſt from whence he was taken) yet his Soul ſtill ſubſiſts, and his Body too, ſhall in due Time be rais'd again; and then the Breach made by Sin ſhall be fully healed,

and

and the Union between Soul and Body ſhall never more be diſſolved, but the Duration of both ſhall run on in Lines parallel. And our Saviour expreſly tells us, that *they who ſhall be accounted worthy of a bleſſed Reſurrection, ſhall not, cannot die any more*, Luke xx. *ver.* 36.

So neceſſarily doth a Reſurrection to Judgment, and the Soul's Subſiſtence and Permanence after Death, depend each on the other; and therefore the *Sadducees* were very conſiſtent in their Principles, when they deny'd both together. And ſo much for the Philoſophy of the *Sadducees* in this Matter.

The *Phariſees* on the other ſide held a juſt contrary Chain of Doctrines, *viz.* That there are certain immaterial and inviſible Beings, both Angels, and alſo Spirits of Men diſtinct Subſtances from their Bodies, and ſubſiſting after the Death of their Bodies, and therefore that there ſhall be a Reſurrection. He that believ'd one of theſe Hypotheſes, believ'd all; and he that deny'd either of them, equally deny'd the reſt.

Now St. *Luke* expreſly tells us, that St. *Paul* openly declar'd himſelf to be on the *Phariſees* ſide in this Controverſy, *v.* 6. He made indeed this Profeſſion at that time politickly, and to ſave himſelf from preſent Danger; but yet his Profeſſion was honeſt and true, and void of any Deceit or Equivocation. And why ſhould St. *Luke* together with the Error of the *Sadducees*, in denying a Reſurrection, join their other Opinions; that there are no ſuch things as Angels, or Spirits of Men diſtinct Subſtances from their Bodies, but that he believ'd theſe Opinions to be equally Errors with the former, and indeed to have a neceſſary Connection with it?

But let us hear the Determination of our Lord himſelf in this Controverſy; *Matth.* 22. *ver.* 31, 32. *But as touching the Reſurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was ſpoken to you by God, ſaying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* Where our Saviour proves againſt the *Sadducees*, the Reſurrection of the

Dead,

Dead, from the words of God concerning *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, ſpoken to *Moſes* many Ages after the Death of thoſe bleſſed Patriarchs, *I am the God of Abraham*, &c. And he lays down this Hypotheſis as the Foundation of his Argument, that *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*. Which indeed is an evident Propoſition, ſeeing for God to be one's God, neceſſarily implies a preſent Relation that God hath to him; and no Relation can continue, where either of the Relatives ceaſe and is taken away. Whence it clearly follows, that *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* were alive, and did ſubſiſt (*viz.* in their Spirits) when God ſpake thoſe words to *Moſes*, that is, many Ages after the Death of their Bodies.

And to this Senſe of our Saviour's words, doubtleſs the holy Apoſtolick Biſhop and Martyr *Polycarp* had reſpect in his laſt Prayer at the Stake, recited by *Euſebius E. H.* Book 4. Chap. 15. out of the Epiſtle of the Brethren of *Smyrna*, who were preſent at his Martyrdom. For in the Beginning of that

Prayer, he thus addreſſeth himſelf to God. [k] *O thou God of the whole Race of righteous Men, who live before thee.* And having particularly mention'd the Martyrs, he preſently adds, [l] *Among whom may I be receiv'd before thee this Day.* So *Juſtin Martyr* in his ſecond Apology, *p.* 96. (as it is reckon'd in the vulgar Editions) tells us, that by what was ſaid out of the Buſh to *Moſes*, *I am the God of Abraham*, &c. was ſignified, [m] *That thoſe Men even after Death, do ſtill remain and ſubſiſt.* Hence alſo in the moſt ancient Liturgies of the Church, the Place and Receptacle of the Spirits of juſt Men deceaſed is called [n] *The Region of the living, the Boſom of Abraham, and Iſaac and Jacob*, as we find it in the Office for the Dead, at large deſcrib'd by the Author of the *Eccleſiaſtical Hierarchy, Chap. ult.* And from thoſe ancient Liturgies our Church hath taken that Prayer of hers, which we have in the Office for the

[k] Ὁ θεὸς πάντων τῶν ψυχῶν τῶν δικαίων, οἱ ζῶσιν ἐνώπιόν σου.
[l] Ἐν οἷς προσδεχθεῖην ἐνώπιόν σου σήμερον.
[m] Ἐμφαίνεσθαι ἐκείνους μένειν.
[n] Ἡ χώρα τῶν ζώντων.

Burial

Burial of the Dead. *Almighty God, with whom do live the Spirits of juſt Men, that depart hence in the Lord.*

Now our bleſſed Saviour having clearly prov'd, that the Spirits of Men can, and do ſubſiſt after Death, had thereby ſufficiently confuted the whole Doctrine of the *Sadducees*, without proceeding any farther, conſidering the Connection of their Dogmata or Opinions, before mention'd. They deny'd the Subſiſtence of the Spirits of Men after Death, and therefore deny'd the Reſurrection of their Bodies: And if they could have been convinc'd of the former, they would readily have acknowledg'd the other alſo. In a word, they deny'd in the whole any Life after this, any State or Subſiſtence of Men after Death, and believ'd Death to be *ultima linea rerum, the laſt Line and Bound of things*, beyond which the Concerns of Men are no farther extended. I doubt not but this is a true Account of our Saviour's Reaſoning in that famous Text, which ſome learned Interpreters have ſtrangely perplex'd, for want of

attending to the whole Connection of the *Sadducees* Doctrine above obſerved. Certainly if our Saviour's Reaſoning had been ſo ſubtle, intricate and elaborate, as ſome Expoſitors have made it, it had been impoſſible for the common People to have underſtood the Force of it. But that the Multitude themſelves preſently apprehended it, and wonder'd at our Saviour's convincing way of arguing, is expreſly affirm'd *Mat.* xxii. *ver.* 33. *And when the Multitude heard this, they were aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine.* The Multitude were on the *Phariſees* ſide againſt the *Sadducees*, as *Joſephus* and others aſſure us. This Multitude preſently conceiv'd the Text alledg'd and urged by our Saviour, to be a clear Proof, that the holy Patriarchs ſubſiſted and lived after the Death of their Bodies. And they knew this to be an effectual Refutation of the whole Doctrine of the *Sadducees*, who held that there is no Life after this preſent Life, but that Men dye as the Beaſts that periſh.

Thus

Thus the Doctrine of the Immortality of Man's Soul, and its Subſiſtence after the Death of the Body, appears to be the plain Doctrine of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, deliver'd in the New Teſtament. But leſt we ſhould yet ſuſpect our ſelves to be deceiv'd in the Senſe of thoſe evident Texts of Scripture (as ſome would fain perſuade us, that we dream when we are awake, and that the Sun ſhines not at the brighteſt Noon) I add, that the Catholick Church of Chriſt after the Apoſtles, ever acknowledg'd the ſame Doctrine, and reckon'd it among the undoubted Articles of the Chriſtian Religion. You have already heard the Judgment of thoſe Doctors and Martyrs of the Church, who liv'd in or very near the Apoſtles Times; how they believ'd, that the Soul of every Man preſently after Death, hath a Place to go to, and dyes not with the Body. And the ſame Tradition was conſtantly held and maintain'd in the Church all along afterwards; inſomuch that the Doctrine is to be found in the moſt ancient Liturgies, as hath

been above obſerved; wherein it was unfit, that any diſputable Problem ſhould have a Place. Nor would the Church ever tolerate or ſuffer any Man, under her Government, to teach the contrary Opinion.

To paſs by the Dreams of thoſe infamous Hereticks the *Valentinians*; the firſt (to my beſt Remembrance) that univerſally affirm'd the Diſſolution of all Mens Souls together with their Bodies, were certain Heterodox Perſons of *Arabia*, about the middle of the third Century, mention'd by *Euſebius* in his ſixth Book of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, *Chap.* 37. where he tells us that they held, ° *That the Souls of Men in this preſent World, die and periſh together with their Bodies; but that at the Reſurrection they return again to Life, together with the ſame Bodies.* Againſt theſe Novelliſts a great Council was preſently call'd, wherein the famous *Origen* was preſent; and he by his Argu-

° Τὴν ἀνθρωπείαν ψυχὴν τέως μὲ χρῆ ἐνεσῶτα καιρὸν, ἅμα τῇ τελευτῇ συν ἀποθνήσκειν τοῖς σώμασι καὶ συνδιαφθείρεσθαι αὖθις δὲ ποτε χρῆ τὴν ἀναστάσεως καιρὸν σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀναβιώσεσθαι.

ments

ments ſo effectually dealt with them, that they renounc'd their Error, and ſo prevented the *Anathema* of the Council, that would otherwiſe certainly have been denounc'd againſt them.

I add over and above, that the Subſiſtence of the Soul of Man after the Death of his Body, was a Tradition generally, nay I think univerſally, receiv'd among the civiliz'd Heathen Nations. For tho' certain wrangling and contentious Philoſophers among them diſputed the Matter, and by diſputing came at laſt moſt of them to doubt of it, and ſome of them flatly to deny it; yet this could not hinder, but that the Notion ſtill prevailed among the Generality of Men in every Age and Nation. Nay in that Part of the World, which for ſo many Ages remain'd undiſcover'd and unknown to the reſt of the Earth, (there being no very ancient Hiſtorian or Writer extant, that gives us any certain Account of it) I ſay, in that part of the World which is call'd *America*, when it was firſt diſcover'd by the Chriſtians, this

Faith

Faith of the Soul's Immortality was found to obtain. *Joſeph Acoſta* a learned *Spaniard*, and an approved Author, who had liv'd in thoſe Parts, tells us, *L.* 5. *c.* 7. that the *Indians* of *Peru* believ'd commonly, *that the Souls of Men liv'd after this preſent Life.* Nay, in that Region of *America* which is called *Nova Francia*, *New France*, altho' when it was firſt diſcover'd, the People were found rude and barbarous; inſomuch that a good Author ſaith of them, *That they are not bound by any Laws, nor obſerve any good Cuſtoms, but live as Beaſts devoid of Reaſon*; yet even of theſe the ſame Author thus teſtifieth. [p] *They believe the Immortality of Mens Souls, and ſay, that when they leave their Bodies, they go to another Region, where their deceaſed Friends are.* Moreover, *Lerius* tells us of a ſtrange ſort of People in *America*, of a hard Name, (they are call'd by him, *To vou pinam baultii*) who acknowledge no particular God at

[p] *Animarum credunt immortalitatem, dicuntq; quòd poſtquam ex corpore migrârunt, tunc in aliam migrant regionem, ubi amici illorum defuncti reperiuntur.*

all,

all, but only in general, certain Spirits with whom their Prieſts converſe, from whom they believe themſelves to receive Courage and Succeſs in War, and the Production of the Fruits of the Earth: And therefore they are inſtanc'd in by ſome as a Nation Atheiſtical, tho' unjuſtly; for thoſe Spirits which they acknowledge are their Gods. However theſe very Men (as the ſame *Lerius* informs us) confeſs that "*The Souls of the Virtuous* (that is of thoſe who have valiantly defended their Country, for this ſeems to be the chiefeſt, if not the only Virtue which they admir'd) "*do preſently after Death, fly beyond certain very high Mountains, and at laſt light on moſt pleaſant Gardens, where they lead a merry Life in perpetual Delights and Dances: And that on the other ſide, the Souls of Cowards, and degenerate Souls, go* ad Stignan, that is to the Devil, *and live in Torments with him.*" In a word, I am yet to ſeek for that Nation in the World, among whom the primitive Religion,

taught

taught by God to the first Men, is so utterly corrupted and lost, but that they have still some Notion remaining among them, of the Soul's Immortality and Permanence after Death.

To conclude therefore, let us firmly adhere to this confessed Truth, this great Truth, this fundamental Truth, not only of our Christian Religion, but of Religion in general. Let us take heed of those Men, who professing to believe the Resurrection promis'd in the Gospel, do yet deny the Subsistence of Man's Soul in the Interval between Death and that Resurrection. That Faith and this Denial cannot well stand together; the Resurrection of the Body necessarily supposing the Immortality and Permanence of the Soul, as I have evidently shewn you. They therefore that deny the latter, lay a sure Foundation for the Denial of the former too; which is the great Article of our Religion, the Subversion whereof renders our whole Faith vain, as the Apostle tells us, 1 *Cor.* xv. *ver.* 16, 17.

But much more are we to beware of thoſe, who deny this Truth with a direct Deſign to deſtroy all our Hopes or Fears of any Life to come. Let not the Sophiſtry of theſe Men, who ſtudy to ſhake off their Chriſtianity and the Religion of Mankind at once, in the leaſt unſettle our Perſuaſion and Belief of this eſtabliſhed Verity. It is here, if any where, certain, that *Vox populi* (or rather *populorum*) *eſt vox Dei*, the Voice of all People and Nations, howſoever diſtant in Place, however otherwiſe differing in Religion from each other, yet all here ſinging the ſame Song, muſt needs be the Voice of God; or at leaſt an Eccho of that Voice, by which God ſpake to holy Men in the Infancy of the World, and reveal'd to them the Doctrine of a future Life; a Voice once ſo ſtrongly and convincingly utter'd, that it went thro' all the Earth, and to the End of the World; and there is no Speech nor Language, no People or Nation, where the ſame Voice is not ſtill heard; to allude to the words of the Pſalmiſt,

5. *Pſal.*

Pſal. xix *ver.* 3, 4. This were ſufficient to arm us againſt the Cavils of thoſe few ſelf-opiniated Men, that in every Age (eſpecially in this of ours) have made it their Buſineſs to moleſt and diſturb the common Faith of the World. But when we have the Conſent of Nations confirm'd by a new divine Revelation, a Revelation prov'd to be ſuch by the moſt undeniable Arguments, what Madneſs were it to doubt? Let us not therefore give any Ear to the Voice of the *Epicurean*, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we dye.* That is, let us live like Beaſts, becauſe we are to dye as ſuch, 1 *Cor.* xv. *ver.* 31. But rather let us reſolve to *live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent World*; becauſe tho' as to our Bodies, we may dye to Morrow, and muſt dye ſhortly; yet our Souls are certainly to live and ſubſiſt after Death, in order to a future Doom of Happineſs or Miſery. Let us hearken to the wiſeſt of Men, *Solomon*; who having aſſerted the Soul's Immortality, *Eccleſ.* xii. *ver.* 7. *Then ſhall the Duſt return to the Earth as it was, and the Spi-*

rit

rit ſhall return unto God who gave it; preſently after *ver.* 13, 14. concludes, and his Concluſion ſhall be mine, in theſe words:

Let us hear the Concluſion of the whole Matter, Fear God and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole of Man. For God ſhall bring every Work into Judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

In the Day of which dreadful Judgment God ſhew Mercy to us all, thro' *Jeſus Chriſt* our Saviour.

To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be given all Honour and Glory, Adoration and Worſhip, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

SER-

SERMON III.

Concerning the Middle State of Happineſs or Miſery, allotted by God to every Man preſently after Death, according as he has been good or bad in his paſt Life, inconſiſtent with the *Popiſh* Doctrine of Purgatory.

Being a ſecond Sermon on Acts i. *Ver.* 25. the latter End of the Verſe.

That he might go to his own Place.

IN my former Diſcourſe on this Text, having gather'd two Propoſitions from it, I fully diſpatch'd the firſt of them, con-

concerning the Subſiſtence and Permanence of Man's Soul after the Death of his Body. I am now to proceed (with God's Aſſiſtance) to the other Propoſition or Obſervation, which was this.

Obſerv. 2. *The Soul of every Man preſently after Death, hath its proper Place and State allotted by God, either of Happineſs or Miſery, according as the Man hath been good or bad in his paſt Life.*

For the Text tells us, that the Soul of *Judas* immediately after his Death, had not only a Place to be in, but alſo τὸν τόπον τὸν ἴδιον, *his own proper Place*, a Place fit for ſo horrid a Betrayer of his moſt gracious Lord and Maſter. And I have ſhewn you, that the Apoſtolick Writers were wont to expreſs the different Place and State of good and bad Men preſently after Death, by this and the like Phraſes, that they went to their *own proper, due*, or *appointed Places*; that is, to Places agreeable to their reſpective Qualities, the Good to a Place of Happineſs, the Wicked to a Place and State of Miſery. If there were one common Receptacle for

all departed Souls good and bad, (as ſome have imagin'd) *Judas* could not be ſaid preſently after Death to *go to his own proper Place*, nor *Peter* to his; but the ſame Place would contain them both: But *Judas* hath his proper Place, and *Peter* his. And here what avails the Difference of Place, unleſs we allow alſo a Difference of State and Condition? If the Joys of Paradiſe were in Hell, Hell would be Paradiſe: And if the Torments of Hell were in Paradiſe, Paradiſe would be Hell: *Judas* therefore is in Miſery, and *Peter* in Happineſs. And what Happineſs or Miſery can be there, where there is no Senſe of either? If preſently after Death, one common Gulph of Inſenſibility and Oblivion ſwallow'd up the Souls of good and bad alike, the State of *Judas* and *Peter* would be the ſame. The Reſult of all which is manifeſtly this, that the Souls of Men do not only ſubſiſt and remain after the Death of their Bodies, but alſo live and are ſenſible of Pain or Pleaſure in that ſeparate State; the Wicked being tormented at preſent

with a peircing Remorſe of Conſcience, (that ſleepy Lyon being now fully awaken'd) and expecting a far more dreadful Vengeance yet to fall on them; and on the other ſide, the Good being refreſh'd with the Peace of a good Conſcience (now immutably ſettled) and with unſpeakable Comforts of God, and yet joyfully waiting for a greater Happineſs at the Reſurrection. And to prove this more fully will be my Buſineſs at this time. Indeed I have been conſtrained occaſionally to intermix ſomewhat of this Argument in my former Diſcourſe on this Text: But it is a Subject worthy of a diſtinct and more copious Handling.

There are ſome who grant, that the Soul of Man is a diſtinct Subſtance from his Body, and doth ſubſiſt after the Death thereof; but yet they dream, that the Soul in the State of Separation, is as it were in a Sleep, a Lethargy, a State of Inſenſibility, having no Perception at all, either of Joy or Sorrow, Happineſs or Miſery. An odd Opinion, which ſeems altogether inconſiſtent with

it ſelf. For how can the Soul ſubſiſt and remain a Soul without Senſe and Perception? For, as *Tertullian* ſomewhere truly ſaith, *Vita animæ eſt ſenſus, the Life of the Soul is Perception.* Wherefore, to ſay an inſenſible Soul, ſeems a Contradiction in Terms. 'Tis true, whilſt our Souls are confined to theſe Bodies, they can have no diſtinct Perception of things without the Help of Fancy and thoſe corporeal Idea's, and, as it were, Images of things impreſs'd on it, which being ſeated in the Body, muſt neceſſarily dye and periſh with it. But yet even now we find, that the Soul being firſt help'd by Imagination, may at length arrive to a Perception of ſome moſt certain Concluſions, which are beyond the Reach of Imagination. We may underſtand more than we can imagine; that is, we may by Reaſon certainly collect, that there are ſome things really exiſting, whereof we can frame no Idea or Phantaſm in our Imaginations. Thus, I am moſt certain, that there is a Being eternal, that hath no beginning of Exiſtence,

tho' I can never be able to imagine a thing, without attributing ſome beginning of Exiſtence to it. A Phantaſm of Eternity I can never have; but that there is ſomething eternal, I ſay, I can thus by Reaſoning demonſtrate. Either there is ſomething eternal, that had no beginning, or elſe it will neceſſarily follow, that there was a Time or Space (let it be never ſo many Millions of Ages ago, it matters not) when nothing exiſted. If every Being whatſoever had a beginning, before which it was not, then there was a Space or Time (I may have leave to call it ſo, for want of a fitter word) when no Being at all was. He is a Man of a deſperately loſt Underſtanding, that doth not clearly perceive the Evidence of this Conſequence. Now if ever there was a Time when Nothing at all was, then Nothing ever could have been; for by Nothing, Nothing could be produced. But we are ſure, that we our ſelves exiſt, and many other Beings; therefore there is an eternal Being, that had no beginning of Exiſtence, and by which

all other Beings that are not eternal, do exiſt. After the ſame manner we can demonſtrate divers other Propoſitions, which are beyond the Comprehenſion of our Imagination. We have therefore a Faculty or Power within us ſuperior to Imagination; and of this we affirm, that it ſhall ſtill remain, act and operate, even when this groſſer Imagination of ours ceaſeth, and is extinguiſh'd.

If it be inquir'd, in what way the Soul perceives, when out of the Body, whether by the Help of ſome new ſubtiller Organs and Inſtruments fitted to its preſent State, which either by its own native Power given in its Creation, it forms to it ſelf, or by a ſpecial Act of the divine Power it is ſupply'd with, or whether without them; I muſt anſwer with St. *Paul* in a like Caſe, 1 *Cor.* xii. *ver.* 2. [q] *I cannot tell, God knoweth.* And if any Man ſhall laugh at this ingenuous Confeſſion of our Ignorance, his Laughter will but betray his own Ignorance and

[q] Οὐκ οἶδα ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν.

Folly.

Folly. For even now we can ſcarce explain how we ſee or hear, how we think or underſtand, how we remember leaſt of all; tho' we have continual Experience of all theſe Operations in our ſelves. And muſt it be thought ſtrange, that we cannot tell how our Souls ſhall underſtand and operate, when out of our Bodies, that being a State of which we never yet had any Experience? Indeed whilſt our Souls are wrapt in this Fleſh, we can no more imagine how they ſhall act when diveſted of it, than a Child in the Womb (even tho' we ſhould ſuppoſe it to have the actual Underſtanding of an adult Perſon) can conceive, what kind of Life or World that is, into which it is afterward to be born. Or (to uſe another Similitude) we can now no more conceive the manner of the Soul's Operation, when abſent from the Body, than a Man born blind, that never ſaw the Light, can underſtand a Diſcourſe of Colours, or comprehend all the Wonders and Myſteries of the Optick Science. But the thing itſelf, that the Soul in the State

of Separation, hath a Perception of things, and by that Perception is either happy or miſerable, is aſcertain'd to us by divine Revelation, of which we have all reaſonable Evidence, that it is indeed divine, and without the Guidance of which, all our beſt Philoſophy in this Matter, is precarious and uncertain.

It was an Aſſertion of the great [r] *Verulam*, that all Enquiries about the Nature of the reaſonable Soul *muſt be bound over at laſt unto Religion, there to be determin'd and defin'd; for otherwiſe they ſtill lie open to many Errors and Illuſions of Senſe. For ſeeing that the Subſtance of the Soul was not deduced and extracted in her Creation from the Maſs of Heaven and Earth, but immediately inſpired from God: And ſeeing the Laws of Heaven and Earth, are the proper Subjects of Philoſophy, how can the Knowledge of the Subſtance of the reaſonable Soul be derived or fetch'd from Philoſophy? But it muſt be drawn from the ſame Inſpiration from*

[r] Advanc. of Learn. *Lib.* 4. *Chap.* 3.

whence

whence the Subſtance thereof firſt flowed. Let us therefore hear what the divinely inſpir'd Writers, eſpecially of the New Teſtament, and the Doctors of the Primitive Church, by Tradition from them, have taught us in this Matter. And here moſt of thoſe Texts, which we have alledg'd for the Proof of the former Propoſition, will alſo ſerve for the Confirmation of this ſecond. We have heard our Saviour himſelf; but leſt we ſhould be thought to have miſunderſtood him, let us next hear his Apoſtles in this Queſtion.

St. *Paul*, who had been caught up into the third Heaven, and alſo into Paradiſe, which the Scriptures tell us is the Receptacle of the Spirits of good Men, ſeparated from their Bodies, and therefore was beſt able to give us an Account of the State of Souls dwelling there. He aſſures us, that thoſe Souls live and operate, and have a Perception of excellent things. Nay, in the very ſame Text where he ſpeaks of that Rapture of his, *viz.* 2 *Cor.* xii. *ver.* 2, 3, 4. he plainly enough

enough confirms this Hypotheſis. For firſt, when he there declares himſelf uncertain, whether he received thoſe admirable Viſions he ſpeaks of, in or out of the Body, he manifeſtly ſuppoſeth it poſſible for the Soul, when out of the Body, not only to ſubſiſt, but alſo to perceive and know, and even things beyond the natural Apprehenſion of mortal Men. And then when he tells us that he receiv'd in *Paradiſe*, Viſions and Revelations, and heard there ἄρρητα ῥήματα, *unſpeakable words, not lawful* (or rather not poſſible) *for Man to utter*; he directly teacheth, that Paradiſe is ſo far from being a place of Darkneſs and Obſcurity, Silence and Oblivion, where the good Spirits, its proper Inhabitants are all in a profound Sleep, like Batts in their dark Winter Quarters; (as ſome have vainly imagined) that on the contrary it is a moſt Glorious Place, full of Light and raviſhing Viſion, a place where Myſteries may be heard and learnt far ſurpaſſing the reach of frail Mortals. Laſtly the Glories of the third Heaven

and

and of Paradiſe too, ſeem to be by an extraordinary Revelation, open'd and diſcover'd to St. *Paul*, not only for his own ſupport under the heavy preſſure of his Afflictions, but alſo that he might be able to ſpeak of them with greater aſſurance to others. And the Order is obſervable. Firſt he had repreſented to him the moſt perfect Joys of the third, or higheſt Heaven, of which we hope to be partakers after the Reſurrection; and then, leſt ſo long an Expectation ſhould diſcourage us, he ſaw alſo the intermediate Joys of *Paradiſe*, wherewith the Souls of the Faithful are refreſh'd until the Reſurrection; and for our comfort he tells us, that even theſe alſo are inexpreſſible.

The ſame bleſſed Apoſtle, when in the Fleſh, tells us, that he deſir'd *to depart, and to be with Jeſus Chriſt, which is far better*, Phil. 1. *ver.* 23. Where if any Man ſhall doubt what is meant by ἀναλῦσαι, which we tranſlate *to depart*, the Phraſe is clearly explain'd by the following Oppoſition, *ver.* 24. *Nevertheleſs*

to abide in the Flesh is more needful for you. Whence 'tis plain, that ἀναλῦσαι, *to depart*, is to depart from the Flesh, that is, this mortal Body, that is, to dye. Now how could the Apostle think it better for him (yea [t] *by far the better*) to depart from the Body, than to remain in it, if when he should depart from the Body, he should be depriv'd of all Sense, and sink into a Lethargy, and utter Oblivion of things? Is it not better to have the Use of our Reasoning Faculty, than to be depriv'd of it? Is it not better to praise God in the Land of the Living, than to be in a State, wherein we can have no Knowledge of God at all, nor be in any Capacity of praising him? Besides, the Apostle doth not desire to depart from the Flesh, or to dye, meerly that he might be at Rest, and freed from the Labours and Persecutions attending his Apostolick Office; which is the frigid and dull Gloss of some Interpre-

[t] Τὸ στηρίζειν ἐν τῇ σαρκί.
Πολλῷ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον.

ters

ters on the Text, but chiefly in order to this End, that he might *be with Chriſt*. Now certainly we are more with Chriſt whilſt we abide in the Fleſh, than when we depart from it, if when we are departed, we have no Senſe at all of Chriſt, or of any thing elſe.

Let us hear the ſame Apoſtle again, 2 *Cor.* v. *ver.* 6, 7, 8. *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home* (or rather converſant) *in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord: For we walk by Faith, not by Sight: We are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the Body, and to be preſent* (or converſant) *with the Lord.* Where two things are in the firſt place to be obſerv'd: 1. That the Apoſtle doth here undeniably ſpeak of that State of the Faithful, which preſently commenceth after Death, and not of that only, which follows the Reſurrection. For he expreſly ſpeaks of them as in the State of Separation, when they are [u] *abſent from*

[u] Ἐκδημοῦντες ἐκ τοῦ σώματος.

the Body: 2. That the Apoſtle ſpeaking to the Faithful of *Corinth* in general, joins them together with himſelf, ſpeaking all along in the plural Number, *we are confident*, &c. And thereby ſignifies, that he ſpeaks not of a Privilege peculiar to himſelf, and ſome few other eminent Saints like himſelf; but of the Common State and Condition of the Faithful preſently after Death. Which two things being premiſed, the Text alledg'd plainly teacheth us this Propoſition: "That the Faithful when they "are abſent from their Bodies, that is, "departed this Life, are preſent with the "Lord, and that in a Senſe wherein, "whilſt they were preſent in their Bo-"dies, they were abſent from the Lord. And what Senſe, I pray, can that be unleſs this, that, when preſent in their Bodies, they did not ſo nearly enjoy Chriſt, as now, when abſent from their Bodies, they do? No Sophiſtry can poſſibly reconcile this Text with their Opinion who affirm, that the Souls of the Faithful, during the Interval between Death and

and the Reſurrection, are in a profound Sleep, and void of all Senſe and Perception.

But let us at length hear the *Lord Jeſus* himſelf, who came down from Heaven, and therefore knew moſt certainly the whole Oeconomy of the Heavenly Regions; and who upon the Account of his omniſcient and omnipreſent Deity as perfectly knew the miſerable State of thoſe Spirits, who dwell in the oppoſite Regions of Darkneſs. He when he was dying, made this promiſe to the repenting Thief, that was crucify'd with him, *To Day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe*, *Luke* xxiii. *ver.* 43. Where (as learned Interpreters have obſerv'd) Chriſt promiſeth more than he had been ask'd. The Penitent Thief's Requeſt was, *Lord, remember me, when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom.* To which our Saviour anſwers, thou askeſt me to remember thee hereafter, when I come into my Kingdom; but I will not put off thy Requeſt ſo long, *but on this very Day* I will give thee a part and the firſt Fruits

of

of that hop'd-for Felicity; Dye ſecurely, preſently after Death, divine Comforts wait for thee.

To Day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe. Paradiſe? What place is that? Surely every Man that hath heard of it, conceives it to be a place of Pleaſure. And hence it is Proverbial among us to expreſs a very pleaſant and delightful Place by calling it a *Paradiſe*. Into this place our Saviour promiſeth the Thief an admiſſion *on the very Day* that he dyed and was crucify'd with him. Now to what purpoſe was it told him, that he ſhould on *that Day* be an Inhabitant of Paradiſe, unleſs then he ſhould be capable of the Joys and Felicities of that delightful Place? Paradiſe would be no Paradiſe to him, that ſhould have no Senſe or Faculty to taſte and perceive the Delights and Pleaſures of it. But that we may not diſcourſe uncertainly, let us conſider, that the Perſon to whom our Saviour ſpake theſe words was a *Jew*, and that our bleſſed Lord ſpeaking in Kindneſs to him, intended to be under-

ſtood by him. We are therefore to inquire, what the Notion of the ancient *Jews* was concerning Paradiſe, and the Perſons Inhabiting there.

Paradiſe among the *Jews* primarily ſignify'd גן עדן Gan Eden *the Garden of Eden*, that bleſſed Garden, wherein *Adam* in his State of Innocence dwelt. By which, becauſe it was a moſt pleaſant and delightful Place, they were wont Symbolically to repreſent the Place and State of good Souls ſeparated from their Bodies, and waiting for the Reſurrection; whom they believed to be in a State of Happineſs, far exceeding all the Felicities of this Life, but yet inferiour to that conſummate Bliſs which follows the Reſurrection. For they diſtinguiſh'd Paradiſe from the third Heaven, as St. *Paul* alſo, being bred up in the *Jewiſh* Literature, ſeems to do in the above-cited Text, 2 *Cor.* xii. where he ſpeaks of ſeveral Viſions and Revelations that he had received, one in the third Heaven, another in Paradiſe. Hence it was the ſolemn good Wiſh of the *Jews* (as

the [x] learned tell us from the *Talmudiſts*) concerning their dead Friend, *Let his Soul be in the Garden of Eden*, or, *Let his Soul be gathered into the Garden of Eden.* And in their Prayers for a dying Perſon, they us'd to ſay, *Let him have his Portion in Paradiſe, and alſo in the World to come.* In which Form, *Paradiſe and the World to come*, are plainly diſtinguiſh'd. According to which Notion, the Meaning of our Saviour in this Promiſe to the penitent Thief, is evidently this: That he ſhould preſently after his Death enter with him into that Place of Bliſs and Happineſs, where the Souls of the Righteous, ſeparated from their Bodies inhabit, and where they wait in a joyful Expectation of the Reſurrection, and the Conſummation of their Bliſs in the higheſt Heaven. For that our Saviour here did not promiſe the Thief an immediate Entrance into that Heaven, the Ancients gathered from hence, that he himſelf, as Man, did not aſcend thither till after his Reſurre-

[x] *Vid. Grot. in locum.*

 ction,

ction, as our very Creed informs us; which is alſo St. *Auſtin*'s Argument in his fifty ſeventh Epiſtle.

The Texts of Scripture hitherto alledg'd ſpeak indeed only of the Souls of good Men: But by the Rule of Contraries we may gather, that the Souls of the Wicked alſo in the State of Separation are ſenſible, ſenſible of great Anguiſh and Torment at preſent, and being in a dreadful Expectation of a far greater Torment yet to come. Let us hear our Saviour again plainly deſcribing both States of ſeparated Souls in the Parable of the rich Man, and *Lazarus* the Beggar, *Luke* xvi. *ver.* 22, 23, 24, 25. *And it came to paſs, that the Beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Boſom: the rich Man alſo died, and was buried. And in Hell* (in Hades) *he lift up his Eyes, being in Torments, and ſeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Boſom. And he cried and ſaid, Father Abraham, have Mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his Finger in Water, and cool my Tongue; for*

I am tormented in this Flame. But Abraham ſaid, Son, remember that thou in thy Life time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. Here *Lazarus* is expreſly ſaid, preſently after his Death to be in *Abraham*'s Boſom, and comforted there; and the rich Man immediately after his Death, to be tormented in *Hades*.

'Tis true this is a Parable, and accordingly ſeveral things in it are paraboli-cally expreſſed: But tho' every thing in a Parable, be not argumentative, yet the Scope of it is, as all Divines acknowledge. Now it plainly belongs to the very Scope and Deſign of this Parable, to ſhew what becomes of the Souls of good and bad Men after Death. And we have already heard from our Saviour's own Mouth, that one part of the Parable concerning the comfortable State of good Souls in *Abraham*'s Boſom or Paradiſe, immediately after Death, is true and real; and therefore ſo is the other concerning the Souls of the Wicked.

Add

Add hereunto, that our Saviour ſpake this Parable alſo to the *Jews*; and that therefore the Parable muſt be expounded agreeably to the ancient *Cabala* or Tradition received among them concerning the State of ſeparate Souls. Now whereas our Saviour ſaith of the Soul of *Lazarus*, that immediately after his Death it was convey'd by Angels into *Abraham*'s Boſom; we find it was alſo the Belief of the *Jewiſh* Church, before our Saviour's time, that the Souls of the Faithful, when they die, are by the Miniſtry of Angels conducted to Paradiſe, where they are immediately plac'd in a bliſsful and happy State. For the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt on *Cant.* iv. *ver.* 12. ſpeaking of the Garden of *Eden*, (that is Paradiſe) ſaith that thereinto *No Man hath Power of entring but the Juſt, whoſe Souls are carried thither by the Hands of Angels.* If this had been an erroneous Opinion of the *Jews*, doubtleſs our Saviour would never have given any the leaſt Countenance to it, much leſs would he have

plainly confirm'd it, by teaching the ſame thing in this Parable,

Theſe Teſtimonies of holy Writ (to omit divers others) clearly enough prove what we have alledg'd them for. But for our farther Confirmation, and to leave no Ground of Suſpicion, that we have miſunderſtood or miſapply'd them, let us in the next Place hear, what the approved Doctors of the Church, that were the Diſciples and Scholars of the divinely inſpir'd Apoſtles, and the nearer Succeſſors of *theſe* have deliver'd concerning this Matter. Now I do affirm the conſentient and conſtant Doctrine of the Primitive Church to be this: That the Souls of all the Faithful, immediately after Death, enter into a Place and State of Bliſs, far exceeding all the Felicities of this World, tho' ſhort of that moſt conſummate perfect Beatitude of the Kingdom of Heaven, with which they are to be crown'd and rewarded in the Reſurrection: And ſo on the contrary, that the Souls of all the Wicked are preſently after Death in a State of very great Miſery;

Miſery; and yet dreading a far greater Miſery at the Day of Judgment. And here in the firſt Place would it not be highly worth the while to underſtand the Faith in this Queſtion of a cotemporary, Familiar and Fellow-Labourer with the Apoſtles, and a moſt approved one too, [y] canoniz'd and ſainted even while on Earth, by the great Apoſtle St. *Paul*, and himſelf called by the Ancients an Apoſtle, and that delivered in a Writing or Epiſtle, uſed to be read in the publick Aſſemblies of the Primitive Church, together with the holy Scriptures of the New Teſtament? Doubtleſs one clear and full Teſtimony of ſuch an Author, out of ſuch a Writing, is more precious than Gold, worth a thouſand Sentences of our later moſt celebrated Doctors. St. *Clement* therefore in his undoubted [z] Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, *Chap.* 50. thus writes of the Place and State of all faithful Souls preſently after Death.

[y] *Phil.* 4. ver. 3. [z] *Edit. Cotelerii.*

" All the Generations from *Adam* to " this Day, are paſt and gone: But they " that have finiſhed their Courſe in Cha- " rity, according to the Grace of Chriſt, " [a] *poſſeſs the Region of the godly*, who " ſhall be manifeſted in the Viſitation of " the Kingdom of Chriſt. For it is " written, *Enter into thy Chambers, for* " *a very little while, till my Wrath and* " *Fury be paſt over: and I will remem-* " *ber the good Day, and will raiſe you a-* " *gain out of your Graves.*

Where he aſſigns but one Place to the Souls of all good Men deceaſed ſince the beginning of the World, and he calls it *the Region of the Godly*, and underſtands it to be a ſafe and comfortable Refuge, Shelter or hiding Place for them till the Viſitation of the Kingdom of Chriſt, that is till the Reſurrection and final Judgment.

But where are we to ſeek that Text of Scripture, which St. *Clement* applies to this Purpoſe? I anſwer, we may find tho' not exactly the words, yet the Senſe

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[a] Ἐκτσιν χῶρεαν ὁυσιεβῶν.

of

of it, *Iſai* xxvi. *ver.* 19. *Thy dead Men ſhall live, together with my dead Body ſhall they ariſe: Awake and ſing ye that dwell in Duſt; for thy Dew is as the Dew of Herbs, and the Earth ſhall caſt out the Dead.* And *ver.* 20. *Come my People, enter thou into thy Chambers, and ſhut thy Doors about thee: hide thy ſelf as it were for a little moment, until the Indignation be overpaſt.* Where that the words of the 19th *Verſe* were by the *Jews* before our Saviour's time, myſtically underſtood of the real and proper Reſurrection of the Dead at the laſt Day, is certain from the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt on the Place. And 'tis as certain, that the *Chambers* of God's People in the 20th *Verſe* were by the ancient *Jews* alſo myſtically expounded of the Receptacles of the Souls of the Righteous till the Reſurrection. For in the ſecond Apocryphal Book of *Eſdras* (as we number it) *Chap.* iv. *ver.* 35, 36. after ſome curious Queſtions propounded by the Author to his Angel, concerning the State of the World to come, the Angel is brought in thus anſwering:

Did

Did not the Souls alſo of the Righteous ask Queſtions of theſe things in their Chambers, ſaying, How long ſhall I hope in this faſhion? When cometh the Fruit of the Floor of our Reward? And unto theſe things Uriel the Archangel gave them anſwer, and ſaid, even when the number of Seeds is filled in you; that is, when the Number of God's Elect is accompliſh'd, as our Church expreſſeth it in the Office for the Burial of the Dead. To the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks St. *John* in the Revelation, *Chap. 6. ver.* 9, 10, 11. *And when he had opened the fifth Seal, I ſaw under the Altar the Souls of them that were ſlain for the Word of God, and for the Teſtimony which they held. And they cried with a loud Voice ſaying, How long, O Lord holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth; And white Robes were given unto every one of them, and it was ſaid unto them, that they ſhould reſt yet for a little ſeaſon until their Fellow-Servants alſo, and their Brethren, that ſhould be killed as they were, ſhould be fulfilled.*

But

But to return to St. *Clement* again; *the Region of the Godly*, where all the Faithful deceas'd from the beginning of the World, inhabit, of which he here ſpeaks; he in the beginning of his Epiſtle (as was obſerved at firſt in the Explanation of my Text) calls with reference to St. *Peter*, one of that Number, [b] *the Place of Glory*; becauſe, according to the Expoſition of the *Clementine* Liturgy, of which I ſhall give you an Account preſently, they that are there behold the Glory of Chriſt, tho' not in that full Brightneſs wherein it ſhall be ſeen at the Day of his glorious Appearance. And preſently after, he terms the ſame Place, ſpeaking of St. *Paul* there, [c] *the holy Place*, not the *moſt* holy Place. For he ſeems to allude in that Expreſſion, as otherwhere in the ſame Epiſtle he doth, to the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, which at the time of his writing it, was yet ſtanding; wherein there was the Sanctuary, or *holy Place*; and within it the *Sanctum Sanctorum*,

[b] Τόπον τ δόξης. [c] Τὸν ἅγιον τόπον.

rum, the *Holy of Holies*, both Figures of the heavenly things. He altogether ſeems therefore to have thought *the Region of the Godly deceas'd*, to be a Part of the heavenly Regions, as the Sanctuary was a part of the Temple; and near to the higheſt Region of the Heavens, as the Sanctuary was near the Holy of Holies. But I dare not venture too far into theſe curious and abſtruſe Queſtions. Only I note, that upon this Account ſome of the Fathers, as St. *Cyprian*, St. *Ambroſe* and others, ſtuck not to call the Place of the ſeparate Spirits of good Men, by the Name of *Heaven*, or the *Heavens*, meaning, as it [d] appears, not the *Aditum*, or inmoſt Apartment of the Heavens, where *the Throne of the Majeſty on high* is ſeated, and the φῶς ἀπρόσιτον, *the unapproachable Light* ſhines; but a heavenly Manſion near to it. Whence alſo the ancient *Hebrews* were wont to ſay of the ſeparate Spirits of the Righteous, that they are *under the Throne of Glory*.

[d] *Vid. Ambroſ. de bono mortis*, cap. 12. *& eundem ad Michæam, Obſ.* 2.

But

But again, as to St. *Clement*'s *Region of the Godly*, where the Spirits of all the Faithful deceas'd from the beginning of the World inhabit, we have a clearer Account of it in the *Clementine* Liturgy in the Office for the [e] Dead. Where the Entrance of good Souls into that State of Bliſs, which preſently ſucceeds Death, is ſaid to be their Admiſſion [f] *into the Region of the Godly releas'd from their Bodies, into the Boſom of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, and of all thoſe that have pleas'd God and obey'd his Will from the beginning of the World: where all Sorrow Grief and Mourning is baniſh'd.* And preſently after the ſame Region is call'd *the Land* [g] *of thoſe that ſee there the Glory of Chriſt.*

Of the ſame *Region of godly Souls Juſtin Martyr* plainly ſpeaks in his Dialogue with *Trypho*, not very far from the beginning of it. Where among the Catholick Doctrines taught him when he

[e] *Vid. Conſtit. Apoſt.* l. 8. c. 41.
[f] Εἰς χῶρον εὐσεβῶν ἀνακωχῆς.
[g] Τῶν ὁρώντων ἐν αὐτῇ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

firſt became Chriſtian, he delivers this for one, [h] *That the Souls of the Godly* (after Death till the Reſurrection) *remain in a certain better Region, and unrighteous and wicked Souls in an evil one.* And yet the ſame *Juſtin Martyr* in the ſame Book, *p.* 307. condemns it as an Error in the Gnoſticks, that they held, [i] *That as ſoon as they die, their Souls are received up into Heaven, i. e.* the higheſt Heaven.

Remarkable is the Catholick Conſent here. Even thoſe Doctors of the Church, that fancy'd the place of godly Souls to be I know not what ſubterraneous Region; being led into that Error, (for ſuch I take it to be) by the Ambiguity of the *Greek* word ἅδης, yet acknowledge the godly Souls there to be in a very happy Condition. So that, tho' they differ'd from other Doctors of the Church, as to the Situation (if I may ſo ſpeak) of the place of the ſeparate Spirits of good Men, yet as to their State, they well enough

[h] Τὰς μὲν τῶν εὐσεβῶν ψυχὰς ἐν χρείττονί τοι χώρῳ μένειν, τὰς δὲ ἀδίκους καὶ πονηρὰς ἐν χείρονι.

[i] Ἅμα τῷ ἀποθνήσκειν, τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἀναλαμβάνειν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν.

agreed

agreed with them. Thus *Irænæus* is known expreſly to have deliver'd that Opinion in his fifth Book, *Chap.* 31. Yet the ſame Father in his ſecond Book, *Chap.* 63. from the Parable of the Rich Man and *Lazarus* concludes, [k] *that every ſort of Men, (i. e.* both good and bad) *receive their deſerved Habitation even before the Judgment.* And he ſomewhere tells us, [l] *That the Souls in Paradiſe begin there their incorruptible State, viz.* of Bliſs. Again, in his fifth Book *Chap.* 36. he expreſly indeed diſtinguiſheh Paradiſe from the Kingdom of Heaven, and reckons it a lower Degree of Happineſs [m] *to enjoy the Delights of Paradiſe,* than [n] *to be counted worthy to dwell in Heaven.* But yet he acknowledgeth in both our Saviour ſhall be ſeen, [o] *according as they ſhall be worthy or meet who ſee him.* Which the Author of the Queſtions and Anſwers to

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[k] *Dignam habitationem unamquamque gentem percipere etiam ante judicium.*

[l] *Juſtos qui ſunt in Paradiſo, auſpicari incorruptelam.*

[m] Τῆς τῆ παραδείσε τρυφῆς ἀπολαύειν.

[n] Καταξιωθῆναι τῆ ἐν οὐρανῷ διατριβῆς.

[o] Καθὼς ἄξιοι ἔσονται οἱ ὁρῶντες αὐτόν.

the

the Orthodox, in his Anwer to *Queſt.* 75. thus explains, "That the Souls in Paradiſe "do enjoy the Converſation and Sight of "Angels and Archangels, [p] *and alſo of our Saviour Chriſt by way of Viſion*; *viz.* ſuch in its kind, tho' in Degree far more excellent, as whereby the Prophets ſaw him of old. But to return to *Iræneus*, he concludes his Diſcourſe in that Chapter thus; that it is the divine Ordination and Diſpoſition, that thoſe that are ſaved ſhould *per gradus proficere, proceed by Degrees* to their perfect Beatitude: That is, that they ſhould, as St. [r] *Ambroſe* ſpeaks, "Thro' the Refreſhments of Pa-"radiſe arrive to the full Glories of the "heavenly Kingdom.

Tertullian alſo in his Apology, *c.* 47. when he was yet Orthodox, calls Paradiſe [s] *a Place of divine Pleaſantneſs, appointed to receive the Spirits of the Saints.*

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[p] Κατ' ὀπτασίαν ὑ ᾧ τῦ σωτῆρος χριςῦ.

[q] *Ad Michæam Obſerv.* 2.

[r] *Per Paradiſum ad regnum pervenire.*

[s] *Locum divinæ amœnitatis recipiendis Sanctorum ſpiritibus deſtinatum.*

Nay,

Nay in his Book * *of the Soul*, which he wrote after he was ſeduced into the Hereſy of *Montanus*, tho' he ſo far contradicts his former Sentiments, as to lock up Paradiſe, and place a flaming Sword at the Gate of it, againſt all but the Souls of Martyrs, and Diſcourſeth very odly of the Place and State of other good Souls; yet he plainly ſignifieth that the Catholicks of his time, againſt whom he wrote, were of a contrary Belief: And he is forced at laſt himſelf to confeſs, that the good Souls in that ſubterraneous Region, that he ſpeaks of, do enjoy a Happineſs not to be deſpis'd, that they do *in the Boſom of Abraham receive the comfort of the Reſurrection to come*, that is, that they are at preſent in a State of Reſt and Happineſs, and live in a ſure and certain Hope of a greater Happineſs at the Reſurrection. So that his Contention with the Catholicks in this Queſtion, ſavours of a delight that he

* De Anima, *c.* 55.

§ *In Abrahæ ſinu expectando Reſurrectionis ſolatium carpere.*

had to pick Quarrels with them, and seems to be a mere Strife of Words, whilst in the main, he acknowledged the thing it self which they affirm'd.

Now to proceed; from what hath been said, it appears, that the Doctrine of the distinction of the Joys of Paradise, the portion of good Souls in their State of Separation, from that yet fuller and most complete Beatitude of the Kingdom of Heaven after the Resurrection, consisting in that cleerest Vision of God, which the Holy Scriptures call seing him *Face to Face*, is far from being Popery, as some have ignorantly censur'd it; for we see it was the current Doctrine of the first and purest Ages of the Church. I add, that it is so far from being Popery, that it is directly the contrary. For it was the Popish Convention at *Florence*, that first boldly defin'd against the Sense of the Primitive Christians, " *That those Souls, which having contracted the ble-*

" *Illas animas quæ post contractam peccati maculam, &c.*

missio

miſh of Sin, are either in their Bodies or out of them purged from it, do preſently go into Heaven, and there clearly behold God himſelf, one God in three Perſons, as he is. And this Decree they made, partly to eſtabliſh their ſuperſtition of praying to the Saints deceas'd, whom they would needs make us believe to ſee and know all our Neceſſities and Concerns *in Speculo Trinitatis, in the Glaſs of the Trinity*, as they call it, and ſo to be fit objects of our Religious invocation; but chiefly to introduce their Purgatory, and that the Prayers of the ancient Church for the Dead might be thought to be founded on a Suppoſition, that the Souls of ſome faithful Perſons after Death, go into a place of grievous Torment, out of which they may be delivered by the Prayers of the Church, always provided, there be a Sum of Money, either left by themſelves, or ſupplied by their Friends for them. A groſs Impoſition, that hath been, I am perſuaded, the eternal Ruine of thouſands of Souls, for whom our Bleſſed Lord

ſhed his moſt precious Blood, who might have eſcaped Hell, if they had not truſted to a Purgatory.

The Prayers for the Dead, us'd in the ancient Church (thoſe I mean that were more properly Prayers, that is, either Deprecations or Petitions) were of two ſorts; either the common and general Commemoration of all the Faithful deceas'd at the Oblation of the Holy Euchariſt, or the particular Prayers uſed at the Funerals of any of the Faithful lately deceas'd. The former reſpected the Conſummation of Bliſs at the Reſurrection; like as that which our Church uſeth both in the Office for the Communion, and in that for the Burial of the Dead; which indeed ſeems to be no more than what we daily pray for in that Petition of the Lord's Prayer (if we rightly underſtand it) *Thy Kingdom come.* The latter were alſo charitable Omens and good Wiſhes of the Faithful living, as it were accompanying the Soul of the deceaſed to the Joys of Paradiſe, of which they believed it already poſſeſt,

as the ancient Author of the Eccleſiaſtical Hierarchy in the laſt Chapter of that Book plainly informs us. In a word, let any underſtanding and unprejudiced perſon attentively obſerve the Prayers for the Dead in the moſt undoubtedly ancient Liturgies, eſpecially thoſe in the *Clementine* Liturgy, and thoſe mention'd in the Eccleſiaſtical Hierarchy, and he will be ſo far from believing the *Romiſh* Purgatory on the account of thoſe Prayers, that he will be forc'd to confeſs they make directly againſt it. For (to omit other Arguments) they all run, as even that Prayer for the Dead, which is unadviſedly left by the *Romaniſts* in their own Canon of the Maſs, as a Teſtimony againſt themſelves, in this Form, *For all that are in Peace, or at Reſt in Chriſt.* Now how can they be ſaid to be in Peace, or at Reſt in Chriſt, that are ſuppos'd to fry in the ſcorching Flames of Purgatory, and to endure Pains, equal to the Pains of Hell, the Duration of thoſe only excepted?

Indeed the *Romiſh* Purgatory, is of a much later Date, than Prayers for the

Dead, and is an invention utterly unknown to the Catholick Church, for the first three Hundred Years at least. We have already heard the Apostolick Saint, Bishop and Martyr *Clement*, in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, acknowledging but one Place for the Souls of all that have finish'd their course in Charity from the beginning of the World; and that Place to be a safe and comfortable Refuge and Shelter to them till the Resurrection, a Place of Glory, and therefore no Purgatory. And to prevent all Cavils, if any Man shall question, whom St. *Clement* means by those that have finish'd their course in Charity? I answer even all the Elect of God, all that are not Reprobates, all that shall be saved, without exception. For so he himself most expressly tells us a little before the place cited: * *In Charity all the Elect of God have finish'd their course: Without Charity no thing* (or no Man) *is accepted of God.* Far therefore was this truly

* Ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἐτελειώθησαν πάντες οἱ ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Χωρὶς ἀγάπης οὐδὲν εὐάρεστον ἐστὶ τῷ Θεῷ.

Apoſtolick Pope and Biſhop of *Rome* from the Dream of his moſt degenerate Succeſſors, that any Man who dies with that Repentance only, which is called *Attrition*, and is void of Charity or the Love of God above all things, can ever be in the number of God's Elect, or be ſaved at laſt by an after-game in Purgatory. Again, in his ſecond Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, which is affirm'd to be his by the learned Men of the Church of *Rome*, and that not without very probable Reaſons, and however is undoubtedly of the firſt Antiquity, he doth as it were profeſſedly oppoſe the Figment of Purgatory. For thus he writes in the beginning of Chap. 8. [y] *Whilſt therefore we are upon Earth, let us repent. For we are as Clay in the Hand of the Artificer. For as the Potter, if he make a Veſſel and finds it awry or broken in his Hands, may again faſhion it anew; but if before hand he hath thrown it into the fiery Furnace, there is no more help for it, he cannot*

[y] Ὡς οὖν ἐσμὲν ἐπὶ γῆς μετανοήσωμεν.

make it better: So also we, as long as we are in this World, may repent from the whole Heart of the evils we have done in the Flesh, that we may be saved of the Lord, whilst we have time of Repentance. For after we have left this World, we can no longer confess, or repent. What Sophistry is able to reconcile this Divinity with the Romish Purgatory? Surely if there be no *Repentance* at all for Sin in the other World, there can be no *Satisfactory suffering* for Sin there. The Holy God cannot be satisfy'd or atton'd by the Sufferings of those Men, who have no Repentance of those Sins, for which they suffer. And if the Papists will suppose the Souls in Purgatory to suffer the most grievous Pains of it, without a deep Repentance for the Sins, that brought them thither, they must make them very graceless Wretches indeed, as like the Damned in their Wickedness, as they fancy them to be in their Torments.

But to go on. Let us hear *Justin Martyr* again in that Place which we have before in part cited out of his Dialogue

with *Trypho*, p. 223. Where he brings in an old Man appearing to him in his Philoſophick Retirement and Solitude (which ſome think to have been the Addreſs of a real Man, others, an Angelical Apparition, others, only a Fiction of a Perſon uſual in Dialogues) and teaching him the Chriſtian Doctrine, as of other things, ſo eſpecially of Man's Soul, in Oppoſition to the vain Philoſophy of *Plato*, on which he then doted. And of the Soul he is thus ſaid to have ſpoken: *I do not affirm that all Souls die; for this indeed would be advantageous to the Wicked. What then? I ſay that the Souls of the Godly remain in a certain better Region, but unrighteous and wicked Souls in an evil one,* [a] *there waiting for the time of Judgment.* Where the grave Inſtructer manifeſtly undertakes to ſpeak of all Souls; and diſtributes the Univerſality of Souls only into two Ranks, godly and wicked Souls; and he allots but two Places to theſe two ſorts, a better

[a] Τὸν δὲ κείσεως ἀνδεχομένας χεῖνον τότε.

Region

Region to the godly Souls, and an evil one to the wicked; and laſtly he confines both ſorts of Souls to their reſpective Places till the Day of Judgment. He muſt be very dextrous at reconciling Contradictions, that ſhall undertake to bring this Doctrine to any Accord with that of the *Romaniſts* concerning their Purgatory. The ſame excellent Author again in his ſecond Apology (as 'tis reckoned in our vulgar Editions) delivers this as the received Doctrine of the Catholick Chriſtians of his time, p. 66. [a] *That the Souls of the wicked ſubſiſting even after Death, feel Puniſhment; but the Souls of good Men live happily free from Puniſhments.* No good Man therefore need fear a Purgatory after Death, if this Scholar of the Apoſtles, as he ſomewhere calls himſelf, were rightly taught.

I might lead you after the ſame manner thro the Writings of the following Doctors of the firſt three hundred Years, and by clear Teſtimonies out of them

[a] Κολάζεσθαι ἐν αἰδίῳ καὶ μὴ θάνατον ἔχους τὰς τῶν ἀδίκων ψυχάς. τὰς δὲ τῶν παιδείων ἀπολλαγὰς τῶν τιμωρειῶν εὖ διάγειν.

make

make it evident, that altho' ſome of them had otherwiſe ſome odd Conceits concerning the future State of Men; yet not not one of them ever acknowledg'd that Purgatory, which the Church of *Rome* hath impos'd on the Belief of Chriſtians at this Day. But the Time bids me haſten to a Concluſion.

I ſhall therefore only add one Teſtimony more out of an Author, that moſt probably liv'd after the third Century, to ſhew, that even then the Article of Purgatory was a Stranger to the Church of God. The Author of the Queſtions and Anſwers to the Orthodox, in his Anſwer to the ſeventy fifth Queſtion, having ſaid, that in this Life there is no Difference as to worldly Concerns, between the Righteous and the Wicked, he immediately adds: *But after Death,* ἐυθὺς, preſently *the Righteous are ſeparated from the Unrighteous. For they are carried by Angels into their meet Places. And the Souls of the Righteous are conveyed into Paradiſe, where they enjoy the Converſation and Sight of Angels and Archangels,*

and

and of our Saviour Christ also by way of Vision: According to what is said, when we are absent from the Body, we are present with the Lord. But the Souls of the Unrighteous are carried to the infernal Regions, &c. *And they* (that is both sorts of Souls) *are kept in their meet Places till the Day of the Resurrection and Recompence.* I will not dishonour any of your understandings so far, as to think any Explanation necessary, to shew you, how this Testimony makes directly against the Fable of Purgatory.

In a word, the true Rise and Growth of the Doctrine of Purgatory, is plainly this. About the middle of the third Century, *Origen*, among other *Platonick* Conceits of his, vented this, That all the Faithful (the Apostles themselves not excepted) shall at the Day of Judgment pass thro' a Purgatory Fire, the Fire of the great Conflagration, which they shall endure for a longer or shorter Time, according as their Imperfections require a greater or lesser Purgation. And in this Conceit, directly contrary to many express

preſs Texts of Scripture, he was follow'd for the Greatneſs of his Name, by ſome other great Men in the Church of God. But how different this Purgatory is from the *Roman*, every Man of Senſe will preſently diſcern. Afterwards about the End of the fourth, or the beginning of the fifth Century, St. *Auſtin* began to doubt, whether this imagin'd Purgation were not to be made in the Interval between Death and the Reſurrection, at leaſt as to the Souls of the more imperfect Chriſtians. And 'tis ſtrange to obſerve, how he is off and on in this Queſtion. And yet it is not ſtrange neither, conſidering how eaſily he may, nay how neceſſarily he muſt be at a loſs, that leaves the plain and beaten Path of the holy Scriptures and primitive Tradition, to hunt after his own Conceits and Imaginations. Towards the End of the fifth Century, Pope *Gregory*, a Man known to be ſuperſtitious enough, undertook dogmatically to aſſert the Problem, and with Might and Main ſet himſelf to prove it, chiefly from the idle Stories of Apparitions

paritions of Souls coming out of Purgatory. Four hundred Years after, Pope *John* the Eighteenth, or as some say, the Nineteenth, instituted a Holy-Day, wherein he severely requir'd all Men to pray for the Souls in Purgatory. As if the Catholick Church before him had been deficient in their Charity, and forgotten the miserable Souls in that Place of Torment. At length the Cabal at *Florence* in the Year 1439, turn'd the Dream into an Article of Faith, so that now they are damn'd to Hell, that will not believe a *Purgatory*: And the Popes Vassals still tenaciously hold and fiercely maintain the Doctrine, not so much for the Godliness as for the Gain of it.

I have now said all that I can think necessary concerning the State of separate Souls good and bad, keeping my self from all needless Curiosities, within the bounds of the Holy Scriptures, and the receiv'd Doctrine of the Primitive Catholick Church.

The Sum of all is this. All good Men without exception are in the whole inter-

val between their Death and Reſurrection, as to their Souls, in a very happy Condition; but after the Reſurrection they ſhall be yet more happy, receiving then their full Reward, their perfect Conſummation of Bliſs, both in Soul and Body, the moſt perfect Bliſs they are capable of, according to the divers Degrees of Virtue through the Grace of God on their Endeavours attain'd by them in this Life. On the other ſide, all the Wicked as ſoon as they dye, are very miſerable as to their Souls; and ſhall be yet far more miſerable both in Soul and Body, after the Day of Judgment, proportionably to the Meaſure of Sins committed by them here on Earth. This is the plain Doctrine of the holy Scriptures, and of the Church of Chriſt in its firſt and beſt Ages, and this we may truſt to. Other Enquiries there are of more Uncertainty than Uſe, and we ought not to trouble or perplex our ſelves about them.

But leaſt of all are we fiercely to diſpute about the Places of ſeparate Souls, where

where determinately they are ſtated. We ſhould rather imitate here the Modeſty of the Apoſtolick Doctors (who as you have heard) were content to ſay of the Souls of Men, both good and bad, after Death, that they are gone *to their own proper Places, to their due Places, to their meet Places, to Places appointed by God* for them.

I ſhall now conclude with a brief and ſerious Application.

Firſt, this Diſcourſe *is matter of abundant Conſolation to all good Men, when Death approacheth them.* They are ſure not only of a bleſſed Reſurrection at the laſt Day, but of a Reception into a very happy Place and State in the mean time. They ſhall be immediately after Death put in the Poſſeſſion of Paradiſe, and there rejoice in the certain Expectation of a Crown of Glory, to be beſtowed on them at the Day of Recompence. Fear not, good Man, when Death comes; for the good Angels are ready to receive thy Soul, and convey it into *Abraham*'s Boſom. A Place, wherever

it

it is, of Rest, and that not a stupid insensible Rest, but a Rest attended with a lively Perception of a far greater Joy and Delight, than this whole World can afford. A Place of the best Society and Company, where thou shalt be gathered to the Spirits of just Men, to the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs and Confessors, and familiarly converse with those Saints and excellent Persons, whom thou hast heard of and admired, and whose Examples thou hast endeavoured to imitate. A Place that is the Rendezvous of the holy Angels of God, and which the Son of God himself visits and illustrates with the Rays of his Glory. A Place where there shall be no wicked Man to corrupt or offend thee, no Devil to tempt thee, no sinful Flesh to betray thee. A Place of full Security, where thou shalt be out of all possible Danger of being undone and miserable for ever. A Place from whence all Sorrow (because all Sin) is banish'd, where there is nothing but Joy, and yet more Joy still expected. This is the Place

that Death calls thee to. Why therefore ſhouldſt thou be afraid of dying? yea rather, Why ſhouldſt thou not, when God calls thee to it, willingly and chearfully dye, deſiring *to depart, and to be with Jeſus Chriſt, which is far better?* If thou wert to fall into a Lethargick State when thou dieſt, and have no Perception of Comfort till the laſt Day; if Darkneſs were then to overſhadow thee till the Light of Chriſt's glorious Appearance at the Reſurrection came upon thee; this might reaſonably make thee unwilling to die, and deſirous to continue longer here, where there is ſome Comfort, ſome Enjoyment of Chriſt, tho' imperfect. If ſuch a Purgatory, as the Suppoſition of the *Roman* Church hath painted out to the Vulgar, were to receive thee, well mighteſt thou be not only unwilling, but alſo horribly afraid to dye. But God be thanked, Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and the Diſciples of the Apoſtles have taught us much better things. *Wherefore let us comfort one another with theſe words*, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 18.

Secondly, This Diſcourſe *deſerves ſeriouſly to be conſider'd by all wicked Men.* If they dye ſuch, and who knows how ſoon he may dye? they are immediately conſign'd to a Place and State of irreverſible Miſery. They have trod in the Steps of *Judas* in this Life, and ſhall preſently after Death march to the ſame diſmal Place where *Judas* is. A Place where there is no Company but the Devil and his Angels, and thoſe loſt Souls that have been ſeduc'd by them. A Place of horrid Darkneſs, where there ſhines not the leaſt Glimmering of Light or Comfort. A Place of wretched Spirits, that are continually vexed at the ſad Remembrance of their former Sins and Follies, and feel the Wrath of God for them, and tremble at the Apprehenſion of a greater Wrath yet to come; who preſently taſte the Cup of divine Vengeance, and are Heart-ſick to think of the Time when they muſt drink up the full Dreggs of it. This, O Sinner, is the miſerable Place and State whereinto thou ſhalt immedi-

ately enter when thou dyeſt, if thou dyeſt as now thou art.

But thou wilt ſay, I am not ſuch a Wretch as *Judas*, who betray'd our Saviour Chriſt to Death, and ſold his Lord and Maſter for Money. I anſwer, but flatter not thy ſelf; 'tis true thou haſt not ſinn'd in the ſame Inſtance, nor perhaps to the ſame Degree; but ſure I am thou haſt ſinn'd in the ſame kind. For how often (if thou beeſt a voluptuous Man) haſt thou barter'd and parted with thy Intereſt in thy Saviour *Jeſus*, for the Satisfaction of a vile Luſt, and the Enjoyment of a tranſient ſinful Pleaſure? How often, if thou bee'ſt a covetous Man, haſt thou wilfully tranſgreſs'd the Laws of the holy *Jeſus*, by lying, cheating and unjuſt Actions, to gain a few Pieces of glittering Earth, perhaps of leſſer Value than *Judas* was brib'd with. How often, if thou bee'ſt a vain-glorious ambitious Man, haſt thou made thy Conſcience give way to thy vainly conceited Honours? How often haſt thou ſold thy Redeemer for the meer Breath of the People? Thou haſt there-

fore

fore play'd the *Judas*, and if thou dyeſt without Repentance, to *Judas* his Place thou muſt go.

Do not deceive thy ſelf with the Thoughts of a Reprieve till the Day of Judgment, or think thou ſhalſt be in an inſenſible State till then, and not tormented before that time. For immediately after Death, thy State of Miſery ſhall commence. Do not entertain thy ſelf with the deſperate Hopes of a Purgatory, or the Advantage of a broken Plank to ſave thee after the Shipwreck of Death. In the ſame miſerable State thou dyeſt, thou ſhalt continue on to the Day of Judgment, and then thy Miſery ſhall be conſummated. *Conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* *Pſal.* l. 22. To ſhut up all, let us pray and labour that we may never, never be gathered, or come into *the Place of Judas*, the Place and State of reprobate and for ever loſt Spirits; *from this good Lord deliver us*, that when we dye, we may go to the Region of the Godly, to Paradiſe, to *A-*

braham's Bosom, and at the Resurrection may sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, in the Kingdom of Heaven. And in order hereunto, let us here thoroughly purge *our selves from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God*, 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. for there is no Purgation to be expected in the other Life. Yea, let us endeavour to excel in Virtue here, that so we may have a more abundant Entrance both into the Joys of Paradise, and also into the fuller Glories of the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant thro' the same *Jesus Christ*, to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, *&c.*

SER.

SERMON IV.

The low and mean Condition of the bleſſed Virgin conſidered; as alſo the ſingular Grace and Favour of God vouchſafed to her; and that Reſpect which is due to her from us upon that account, wherein the Invocation of her by the Papiſts is confuted.

LUKE i. *ver.* 48, 49.

For he hath regarded the low Eſtate of his Hand-maiden: for behold from henceforth all Generations ſhall call me bleſſed; for he that is mighty hath done for me great things, and holy is his Name.

UPON the very hearing of my Text read, every Man will preſently perceive it to be a Part of the

Magnificat, or the divine Song of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, into which ſhe brake forth upon the Prophetick Salutation of the inſpired *Elizabeth* to her, recited from *ver.* 41. to *ver.* 45. incluſively. For this Song is daily ſung or rehears'd in our Churches, and may it ever continue ſo to be, both for the Excellency of it, and becauſe thereby the Propheey of the bleſſed Virgin in my Text, is in part fulfill'd, that future Generations ſhould call her bleſſed.

The Song, as *Grotius* thinks, hath reſpect to the time of the Children of *Iſrael*'s Departure out of *Ægypt*, by which the time of the *Meſſias* was figur'd and typified, not without a wonderful Congruity of Circumſtances diſpos'd by divine Providence.

There was then a *Miriam*, that is a *Mary*, a Virgin and Propheteſs, the Siſter of *Aaron*, leading a female Troop in the divine Praiſes, *Exod.* xv. *ver.* 20, 21. And here there is another *Miriam* or *Mary* overſhadowed with the Holy Ghoſt, to be celebrated above all Women, and there-

therefore celebrating the Praiſes of God. There was then in the ſecond Place an *Elizabeth*, the Wife of *Aaron*; and here there is another *Elizabeth*, married to a Prieſt of the Line of *Aaron*.

Throughout this excellent Song the ſacred Virgin expreſſeth a deep Senſe of her own Unworthineſs, and upon that account a profound Reſentment of the ſingular Favour of the Almighty beſtowed on her. Her *Magnificat* is not a magnifying of her ſelf, but of the Lord. For thus it begins, *My Soul doth magnifie the Lord*; not my ſelf, who am but a poor unworthy Hand-maid of the Lord, but the Lord himſelf, who hath ſo highly dignified and advanced me tho' unworthy. She firſt ſings in the loweſt and deepeſt Note of Humility, and then raiſeth her Song to the higheſt Strain of Gratitude and Thankſgiving, admiring the tranſcendent Honour to which by the Goodneſs of God ſhe was exalted. For in the former part of my Text, ſhe ſincerely acknowledgeth the very mean Condition ſhe was in, when the divine

Grace

Grace ſurpriz'd her, *for he hath regarded the low Eſtate of his Hand-maiden:* And then ſhe ſets forth the ſuperlative Dignity that God had advanced her to, *for behold from henceforth all Generations ſhall call me bleſſed.*

Let us a little ſtay upon that lower Ground, from whence the holy Virgin takes her Riſe, and conſider her humble Acknowledgment of her own Meanneſs and Unworthineſs, expreſs'd in theſe words, Ἐπέβλεψεν ὅτι ἐπείνωσιν τὴν δούλης αὐτοῦ, which our Tranſlators have well render'd, *he hath regarded the low Eſtate of his Hand-maiden.* For the word ταπείνωσις ſignifies here the ſame with ταπεινότης, a mean, baſe or vile Condition; as[c] *our Body of a baſe Condition*, or *our vile Body*, Phil. iii. *ver.* 21. And it is often by the *Seventy* join'd with a Verb ſignifying to *behold*, *reſpect* or *regard*, as here, and uſed to expreſs a poor mean Condition, or, which is more, an afflicted Condition, whereby one is brought very low, as we uſe to phraſe it.

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[c] Τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν.

So

So 2 *Kings* xiv. *ver.* 26. [d] *The Lord ſaw the Affliction of Iſrael.* And *Pſal.* xxv. *ver.* 18. [e] *Look upon mine Affliction.* But it is eſpecially to be noted, that the words of *Hannah* upon much a like Occaſion, 1 *Sam.* i. *ver.* 11. are in the LXX, almoſt the ſame with the words of my Text. [f] *If indeed thou wilt look upon the Affliction of thine Hand-maiden. Eraſmus* had long ago obſerv'd this, and corrected the vulgar *Latin*, too cloſely followed here by our older *Engliſh* Tranſlation, which hath it, *he hath regarded* humilitatem ancillæ, *the Humility or Lowlineſs of his Hand-maiden*, as that ſignifies the Virtue of the Mind, which we commonly call Humility, but is more properly call'd Modeſty, and by the *Greeks* term'd ταπεινοφροσυνη. This erroneous Tranſlation, the Pretenders to Merit at *Rome* had greedily catch'd at, and thence inferr'd, that the bleſſed Virgin was for the Merit of her Humility ſo highly advanc'd by God.

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[d] Ἰδὼν κύριος τὴν ταπείνωσιν Ἰσραὴλ.

[e] Ἴδε τὴν ταπείνωσίν μου.

[f] Ἐὰν ἐπιβλέπων ἐπιβλέψῃς ἐπὶ τὴν ταπείνωσιν τῆς δούλης σου.

But

But *Eraſmus* clearly evinc'd that ταπείνωσις is rather in this place to be render'd *parvitas, vilitas*, *the Littleneſs* or *Vileneſs*, that is, *the low and mean Eſtate* of thine Hand-maiden. The ignorant and angry Monks indeed fell very foul upon that excellent Man for this his Criticiſm; whence there aroſe a Proverb in that time, concerning any Man that ſhould attempt to amend that which could not be better expreſs'd, *vult corrigere Magnificat*, *The Man would correct the Magnificat.* But the more learned Papiſts are ſince grown wiſer, and have ſubſcrib'd to the Interpretation of *Eraſmus*; among whom is the judicious *Maldonat*, who gives us this clear account of it: [g] *If we weigh*, ſaith he, *the ſenſe of theſe words, it is ſo much the leſs credible, that* Mary *ſhould here have ſpoken of her own Virtue, by how much more ſhe excel'd in that Virtue. For I cannot think it to be Humility, for a Man not only to know, but alſo to proclaim himſelf to be humble. Humility is the only*

[g] *Maldonat in loc.*

Virtue

Virtue that knows not it ſelf: And I cannot tell how it comes to paſs, that the humble perſon, as ſoon as he knows, or makes known his own Humility, loſeth it. And beſides, it was not the Deſign of the moſt humble and holy Virgin, to declare that by her Merits, ſhe obtained ſo great a Benefit; but rather to profeſs her ſelf utterly unworthy of ſuch a Favour. She intended not therefore to ſay that her Virtue, but rather her low and mean Eſtate, and in a word, her Unworthineſs was regarded by God: That although ſhe was altogether unworthy of it, yet God was pleas'd to vouchſafe her ſo great an Honour. Thus to ſpeak became her, both as a Virgin, and an humble and modeſt one. So far that learned Jeſuit. In ſhort, there is no doubt but that the Bleſſed Virgin was as humble and lowly in her Spirit, as ſhe was low and mean in her Fortune and Condition, and that God in beſtowing ſo ſingular a grace and favour on her, had reſpect to that Virtue of her Mind, more than to the lowneſs of her Eſtate. But yet we ſay, that it was the Meanneſs of her Condition, that

ſhe her ſelf intended here to expreſs, not her own tranſcendent Humility, which if ſhe had intended to expreſs, ſhe had loſt: But by overlooking that Virtue of her Mind, and fixing her Thoughts on her mean and unworthy condition; ſhe indeed exercis'd that Humility, of which ſhe was a true owner. And therefore the ſame *Maldonat* commends thoſe Interpreters, who reſolve, [h] *That* Mary *in this place did not profeſs, but practiſe Humility.*

But what was the low Eſtate of this Bleſſed Handmaiden of the Lord? I anſwer, it was a State of Poverty. So poor ſhe was, ſo mean her Portion, that ſhe could arrive to no higher a Fortune, than to be the eſpouſed Wife of a poor Carpenter. So poor, that in her Child-birth ſhe was not able to procure a Room (even in her greateſt neceſſity) in that Inn, to which ſhe came as a Gueſt; but, being neglected by her richer Kindred of the Royal Tribe and Family of *David*, lay indeed in the Straw, and was brought

[h] *Mariam hoc loco humilitatem exercuiſſe, non ſignificâſſe*

to Bed in a Stable, and that in a Cave under Ground, in the Vicinity of the poor Town of *Bethlehem*, according to the Tradition of the moſt ancient Doctors of the Church. In the very place it was, (as ſome have probably conjectur'd) where poor *David* the Anceſtor of the Meſſias, and his moſt illuſtrious Type, fed his Sheep, and from that mean kind of Life, was by the ſingular Grace and Favour of God, called to be the King and Ruler of his People, *Pſal.* lxxviii. *ver.* 70, 71, 72. So mean ſhe was, that at her Purification, her great and generous Piety, was confin'd to the Offering of the Poor, according to the Law of *Moſes*, *a pair of turtle Doves, or two young Pigeons:* A Lamb (the preſcribed Offering to thoſe of Ability) her Purſe could not reach to, *Luke* ii. *ver.* 22, 23, 24. compar'd with *Levit.* xii. *ver.* 6, 7, 8. Laſtly, ſo poor ſhe was, and ſtill continued, that her Bleſſed Son, when dying, thought it neceſſary to recommend her to the charitable Care of his moſt beloved Diſciple, *John* xix. *ver.* 25, 26, 27.

From

From all which we may learn, that innocent and virtuous Poverty, is conſiſtent with the trueſt Felicity; and that thoſe who are richeſt in Grace, the beſt of God's Saints, and moſt regarded by him, may be of a low, and deſpicable Eſtate in this World. If therefore thou ſincerely loveſt God, and art truly devoted to his Service, how poor otherwiſe and contemptible and miſerable ſoever thou mayeſt be, thou art a happy Man: happy and bleſſed, as the bleſſed Virgin was: Yea bleſſed, as her bleſſed Son our Lord and Saviour was here on Earth; who was born of poor Parents, in the meaneſt circumſtances, and afterwards choſe a life of Poverty; ſo great, that whereas *the Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Neſts, he had not where to lay his Head, Matth.* viii. *ver.* 20. So great, that he liv'd upon the Charity of good People that *miniſtred to him, Mark* xv. 41. and *Luke* viii. 3. The Poor are either good or bad, that is, the Poverty of Men is found either in the way of Righteouſneſs, or in the way of Wickedneſs

edneſs. The good and virtuous Poor Man, though he deſerves our greateſt pity; (as by that is ſignify'd our propenſe inclination to do him good, and relieve his neceſſities) yet he is alſo an object of our greateſt Eſteem and Admiration. This is the Man that baffles the Devil's challenge to God concerning holy *Job*, *that ſerves God for nought*, that courts Virtue without Regard to her Dowry, that is, any viſible Dowry, any preſent Pay, and by a mighty Faith, reſts ſatisfy'd with the future Reward. On the other ſide, the poor Man that is as Wicked in the ſight of God, as he is wretched in this World, is of all Men the moſt miſerable. For how great muſt be the miſery of that Man, who being Poor towards God, as well as Men, ſhall conſequently be miſerable, not only in this, but in the other Life alſo? This is a poor Wretch indeed.

And yet this is the Caſe of every Man, that is ſo diſcontented with his Poverty, as to murmur at the Providence of God; that ſeeks by Lying and Stealing and o-

ther irregular courſes to redreſs his Poverty; that is as proud as he is poor, that is unthankful to his Benefactors, that loves that World, which loves not him, that being unhappy in this Life, yet ſeeks not heartily after the happineſs of the other Life.

But may not he that is rich in this World, be alſo happy in the other? Yes; but then he muſt be after a ſort aſſimilated and made like to the Poor, *viz.* by being poor in Spirit. By an humble mind in a high Fortune, and by condeſcending to Men of low Eſtate; by not truſting in or ſetting his Heart upon thoſe worldly Riches, that he is Poſſeſſor of, but earneſtly coveting the heavenly Treaſures; by temperance at his full Table, by intermixing ſometimes religious Faſtings with his Feaſts, and by exerciſes of Mortification; by delighting more in the Service of God and virtuous Actions, than in ſenſual Pleaſures; laſtly, by paring off his Superfluities, and expending them in works of Piety and Charity. Upon theſe Terms only he that is Rich in this World,

World, may reaſonably hope to be bleſſed and happy alſo in the other.

'Tis an excellent advice that St. *James* in his Epiſtle gives in a few words both to Poor and Rich, *Chap.* i. *ver.* 9, 10. *Let the Brother of low degree rejoyce in that he is exalted; but the Rich in that he is made low, becauſe as the Flower of the Graſs he ſhall paſs away.* Where the ſenſe of the former part of the Advice, is clearly this: Let not the Man that is Poor among you Chriſtians, and contemptible in the World, be caſt down or dejected at his Poverty; but rather let him rejoice, conſidering the ſublime and happy Eſtate, to which by Chriſtianity he is exalted, and let him therein Glory. His advancement is, that he is a Chriſtian, for by this one Name an immenſe Dignity is ſignify'd, *viz.* that he is a Son of God, and a Coheir with Chriſt in the heavenly Kingdom. But what means the Apoſtle by the oppoſite Clauſe, *but the Rich in that he is made low, becauſe as the Flower of the Graſs he ſhall paſs away?* I anſwer, that the beſt Interpreters think that the

Speech of the Apoſtle is here Elliptical, and to be ſupplied by a Verb of a contrary Signification. As in that of St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* iv. 3. *Forbiding to Marry and to abſtain from Meats*, we muſt underſtand (according to the Supplement of our *Engliſh* Tranſlation) *and commanding to abſtain from Meats.* So here the Speech is to be thus ſupplied: *But let the rich Man hang down the Head and be humble, in that he is made low*, in that a little time ſhall level him with the pooreſt Man; *becauſe as the Flower of the Graſs*, ſo he and his riches *paſs away.* The ſcope of the Apoſtle is certainly this, to ſet before the Rich their own Vileneſs, that is, the Inſtability of their Condition, and by the conſideration thereof to cure the Pride and Inſolence, to which they are commonly incident. And the Exhortation is the ſame with that of St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* vi. *ver.* 17, 18. *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they be not high minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that*

they be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, &c.

But let us at length proceed to the second part of the Text. The bleſſed Virgin having ingenuouſly acknowledged the low Eſtate and Condition, wherein the Grace of God found her, immediately proceeds in the next words to declare the tranſcendent Dignity of that Eſtate, to which by the ſame Grace ſhe was now advanc'd: *For behold from henceforth all Generations ſhall call me bleſſed.*

From henceforth, that is, from this very time of my Conception of the holy Jeſus, and upon the account of it. *All Generations*, that is, all thoſe Generations, that from henceforth to the end of the World, ſhall believe on that Jeſus, who ſhall be born of me. *Shall call me bleſſed*, that is, ſhall acknowledge and proclaim me to be the moſt bleſſed and happy of Women, congratulating the ſingular Grace and Favour of God vouchſafed to me. In the Proſecution of this part of my Text, I ſhall fix theſe bounds to my

Discourse. I. To shew you more particularly what was the singular Grace and Favour of God, vouchsafed to the blessed Virgin. II. To explain more distinctly, what is that Respect, that is due to her from us upon that account.

I. *What was the singular Grace and Favour bestowed on the blessed Virgin.* A most transcendent Favour it was. For,

1. She was of all the Women, of all the Virgins in *Israel* elected and chosen by God, to be the Instrument of bringing into the World the long desired Messias. All the virtuous Daughters of *Jacob*, a good while before the Revelation of our Saviour, but especially in the Age when he appear'd, (the time wherein they saw the more punctual and remarkable Prophecies concerning the coming of the Messias fulfill'd) desired, and were not without hopes each of them, that they might have had this Honour done unto them. But it was granted to none of all those holy Women and Virgins, but to the Virgin *Mary*. And there-

therefore *all Generations ſhall call her bleſſed.*

2. The bleſſed Virgin *Mary* was the only Woman, that took off the Stain and Diſhonour of her Sex, by being the Inſtrument of bringing that into the World, which ſhould repair and make amends for the Loſs and Damage, brought to Mankind by the Tranſgreſſion of the firſt Woman *Eve.* By a Woman, as the principal Cauſe, we were firſt undone; and by a Woman as an Inſtrument under God, a Saviour and Redeemer is born to us. And the bleſſed Virgin *Mary* is that Woman. Hence *Irenæus* in his 5th Book *Chap.* 19. makes a compariſon between the Virgin *Eve,* (for ſuch the Ancients believed her to be, till after her Tranſgreſſion) and the Virgin *Mary. Seductione illa ſoluta,* &c. i. e. *That Seduction being diſſolv'd, whereby the Virgin* Eve *deſign'd for Man, was unhappily ſeduced: The Virgin* Mary *eſpouſed to Man, by the Truth happily received the glad Tidings from an Angel. For as the former was ſeduced by the Speech of an Angel to*

flee from God, having tranſgreſſed his Commandment; ſo the latter by the word alſo of an Angel received the good News, ut portaret Deum, that ſhe ſhould bear God within her, being obedient to his word. And as the former was ſeduced to flee from God, ſo the latter was perſuaded to obey God. [i] *So that the Virgin* Mary *became the Comforter of the Virgin* Eve. Where the laſt words of the holy *Martyr*, are groſly miſinterpreted by the *Latin* Tranſlator, and have given occaſion to the Papiſts to conclude from them, that *Eve* was ſav'd by the Interceſſion of the Virgin *Mary*. A moſt abſurd Conceit, unworthy of the learned and holy *Father*, or indeed of any Man elſe of common Senſe; for who knows not that *Eve* was paſt all need of Interceſſion, before ever the bleſſed *Mary* could be capable of making Interceſſion for her? Doubtleſs the *Greek* word us'd by *Iræneus* here, was παράκλητος, which as it ſignifies *an Advocate*, ſo it alſo as frequently ſig-

[i] *Uti Virginis Evæ, Virgo Maria fieret advocata.*

nifies

nifies *a Comforter*, and ſo ought to have been rendred here. But, you'll ſay, how did *Eve* receive Comfort from the bleſſed Virgin *Mary*? I anſwer, in that gracious Promiſe delivered by God himſelf in the Sentence paſs'd on the Serpent, after *Eve*'s Seduction by him, *Gen.* iii. *ver.* 15. where it is ſaid, *that the Seed of the Woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpents Head.* Every Man now knows, that the Seed there ſpoken of, is Chriſt; and conſequently, that the individual Woman, whoſe immediate Seed he was to be, is the bleſſed Virgin *Mary*. The holy Virgin was the happy Inſtrument of the ſaving Incarnation of the Son of God, who hath effectually cruſh'd the old Serpent the Devil, and deſtroyed his Power over all thoſe that believe on himſelf; and thereby ſhe became the Inſtrument of Comfort to *Eve*, and all other Sinners. This is certainly all the good *Father* intended by that Expreſſion.

3. The bleſſed Virgin was conſecrated to be a Temple of the Divinity in a ſingular manner. For the eternal Son of God,

God, by an ineffable Conjunction, united himſelf to that human Nature, which was miraculouſly conceiv'd and form'd in her, even whilſt it was within her; and ſo he that was born of her, at the very time that he was born of her, was θεάνθρωπος, *God and Man.* O aſtoniſhing Condeſcenſion of the Son of God! O wonderful Advancement of the bleſſed Virgin! And therefore we daily ſing in our *Te Deum*, *Thou art the King of Glory O Chriſt, thou art the everlaſting Son of the Father. When thou tookeſt upon thee to deliver Man, thou didſt not abhor the Virgin's Womb.* Upon which Account the Fathers of the third general Council at *Epheſus*, conven'd againſt *Neſtorius*, approv'd the Title of θεοτόκος, *the Mother of God*, given to the bleſſed Virgin.

They approv'd it, I ſay, they did not firſt invent it, as ſome have ignorantly affirm'd. And therefore they themſelves in their ſynodical Epiſtle ſay, that the holy Fathers before them, doubted not to call the bleſſed Virgin θεοτόκον, *Deiparam*, *the Mother of God.* Indeed an

whole

whole Age before that Council, we find *Euſebius* expreſly giving that Title to the ſacred Virgin in his third Book of the Life of *Conſtantine*, *Chap.* 43. And *Socrates*, a moſt credible Witneſs in this Matter, in the ſeventh Book of his *Eccl. Hiſt. Chap.* 32. aſſures us that *Origen*, long before *Euſebius*, largely explain'd and aſſerted that Title, as applied to the bleſſed Virgin. And to go yet higher, we have heard *Irenæus*, who was a Scholar to a Scholar of the Apoſtles, magnifying the Virgin upon this Account, that ſhe did *portare Deum*, *bear God* within her. If ſhe did *portare Deum*, ſhe did *parere Deum*; if ſhe bore God, ſhe brought him forth too, and ſo was θεοτόκος, *the Mother of God*, that is, of him that was God. Nay the bleſſed Martyr and Diſciple of the Apoſtles, *Ignatius*, in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, *Edit. Voſ.* p. 27. fear'd not to ſay, [k] *Our God Jeſus Chriſt was conceived of Mary.* But what need we ſearch after human Autho-

[k] Ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς ἐκυοφορήθη ὑπὸ Μαρίας.

rities,

rities, when the inſpired *Elizabeth* in her divine Rapture a little before my Text, *ver.* 43. plainly gives the bleſſed Virgin the ſame Title? *And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my* Lord *ſhould come unto me?* Where μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου, *the Mother of our Lord*, is doubtleſs of the ſame Import with θεοτόκος, *the Mother of God*: For the Title of *our Lord* belongs to Chriſt chiefly, as he is *our God*. And we are to conceive *Elizabeth*, being fill'd with the Spirit, to have given this Title of *her Lord* to the Babe in the bleſſed Virgin's Womb, not according to the poor narrow vulgar Senſe of the degenerate *Jews*; but according to the moſt auguſt and higheſt Senſe of the word, *viz.* that he is ſo *our Lord*, as to be *our God* alſo. Now the neceſſary Conſequence of this Dignity of the bleſſed Virgin, is, that ſhe remain'd for ever a Virgin, as the Catholick Church hath always held and maintain'd. For it cannot with Decency be imagin'd, that the moſt holy Veſſel, which was thus once conſecrated to be a Receptacle of the Deity,

Deity, ſhould afterwards be defecrated and profan'd by human Uſe. And ſo much of the ſingular Grace and Favour vouchſafed to the bleſſed Virgin.

II. We are next to explain, *what is that Reſpect which is due to her from us upon that account.* She her ſelf in the Text ſaith, *all Generations ſhall call me bleſſed.* Where the Romaniſts fancy, they have found a plain Warrant for all that extravagant Honour which they give the bleſſed Virgin; and that this is an expreſs Prediction of hers, that *that* ſhould be done unto her, which they now do in the Church of *Rome.* Hence one of their celebrated Commentators, that ſo underſtands the Text, could not forbear thereupon, to break out into this amazing Acclamation to the Virgin *Mary*: [1] *Vivat tuum decus, tua laus, tua gloria, quamdiu vivunt Angeli, quamdiu vivent homines, quamdiu vivet Chriſtus, quamdiu Deus erit Deus, in omnia ſæculorum ſæcula.* Which words, not without a

[1] *Cornelius à Lapide, in loc.*

kind

kind of Tremor, I thus *Engliſh*. *Let thy Honour, thy Praiſe, thy Glory live, as long as Angels live, as long as Men ſhall live, as long as Chriſt ſhall live, as long as God ſhall be God, even for ever and ever.* But how vain are theſe Men? The Expreſſion of the bleſſed Virgin doubtleſs ſignifies but the ſame thing, tho' in a wider Extent, with that of *Leah* upon the Birth of her Son *Aſher*, *Gen.* xxx. *ver.* 13. where the LXX hath it: [m] *Happy am I, for the Daughters ſhall call me bleſſed.* No Man can be ſo fooliſh as to imagine, ſhe meant, that the Daughters ſhould pray to her and worſhip her; but only that they ſhould think and acknowledge her to be a happy Woman. So here, when the holy Virgin ſaith, *all Generations ſhall call me bleſſed*; ſhe means no more, than that all Generations ſhould, upon the account of her bringing into the World, the common Saviour, eſteem and proclaim her the moſt bleſſed Woman.

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[m] Μακαρία ἐγὼ ὅτι μακαριοῦσί με αἱ γυναῖκες.

And

And this we moſt willingly and gladly do.

We think and ſpeak moſt reſpectfully of her, and do not ordinarily mention her Name without a Preface or Epithet of Honour, as the holy, the bleſſed Virgin, and the like. We do, by the Appointment of our Church, ſing or rehearſe in our daily Service, her excellent *Magnificat*; and thereby we teſtify our Aſſent to, and Complacence in thoſe ſingular Favours, that God is therein ſaid to have beſtow'd on her; and together with her, we finally return the Praiſe and Glory of all to God alone. We celebrate two annual *Feſtivals* in her Memorial, the *Feaſts* of her *Annunciation* and *Purification*. And if we could think of any other Honour that we could do her, without diſhonouring God the Father and his eternal Son, we would moſt willingly yield it to her. Wherefore the Papiſts are themſelves egregious Calumniators, when they charge us Proteſtants, that we are [n] *Beatæ Virginis con-*

[n] *Maldonat in loc.*

viciatores, Reproachers of the bleſſed Virgin. We defy their Charge; we honour the *bleſſed Virgin* as a moſt ſingular elect Veſſel of God; as one in the higheſt Degree of all meer Mortals honour'd by God: But therefore we will not yield her any of that Honour that is peculiar to God; for God himſelf hath told us, that he *will not give his Glory to another*, *Iſai.* xlii. *ver.* 8. She ſaith indeed, that *all Generations ſhould call her bleſſed*; but not that any Generation ſhould *call* upon *her* to *bleſs* them. This had been a moſt arrogant ſacrilegious Speech, altogether unbeſeeming the moſt humble, as well as holy Virgin.

We have carefully read the holy Scriptures of the *New Teſtament*, and cannot find any one *Iota* in them, that makes in the leaſt for the Invocation and Adoration of the Virgin *Mary*. Nay we find the Stream of holy Writ carrying and directing all our Prayers and Supplications to God alone, thro' *Jeſus Chriſt* the only Mediator. And for the bleſſed Virgin, we cannot be ſo ſtupid as not to

remark

remark and obſerve the great Silence concerning her in ſacred Hiſtory, after the Relation of her bringing forth our Saviour, and her *Preſentation* of him in the Temple, and their Exile into *Egypt*, and Return to *Nazareth*. After this we hear of her but ſeldom, and that only occaſionally. Once ſhe is mention'd as preſent, and receiving a Check from our Saviour, at the Marriage Feaſt of *Cana* in *Galilee*, *Joh.* ii. *ver.* 1, *&c.* Another time ſhe is mention'd together with the Brethren of our Saviour, as enquiring after him, *Mat.* xii. *ver.* 48, *&c.* She is mention'd again, *Joh.* xix. *ver.* 26, 27. as ſtanding by the Croſs of her Son, beholding his Paſſion; and thereby fulfilling the Propheey of good old *Simeon*, that *a Sword ſhould pierce thro' her own Soul*, Luke ii. *ver.* 35. And laſtly, ſhe is mention'd by St. *Luke* as preſent at that Aſſembly of Chriſtians, wherein *Matthias* was elected to the Apoſtleſhip in the room of *Judas*, *Acts* i. *ver.* 14. In all which Places the Mention of her is ſuch, as may ſeem purpoſely deſign'd to have prevented

that ſuperſtitious and idolatrous Worſhip of her, which was afterward ſet up in the Church of *Rome*.

In the reſt of the Writings of the New Teſtament, the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles, wherein they fully inſtruct us in all the Eſſentials of that Religion and Worſhip which Chriſtianity requires of us, ſhe is not ſo much as once nam'd; much leſs is there any the leaſt Intimation of any Invocation or religious Worſhip due to her from us.

'Tis a moſt ridiculous Account which the Romaniſts give us of this Silence of the holy Scriptures. *Lorinus*, a very learned and approved Writer among them, in his Expoſition of *Acts* i *ver.* 14. thus reſolves the Difficulty. *There are few things deliver'd concerning the Mother of Chriſt in the Scriptures, becauſe thoſe things were ſufficient which in her reſpected Chriſt; and alſo becauſe that one Title of the Mother of Chriſt and of God, ſerves inſtead of all Praiſes; and farther becauſe her Teſtimony might be ſuſpected by the unbelieving World: And laſtly, becauſe as*

Adam *was form'd out of the unform'd and thick Earth, and then* Eve *out of his Rib; ſo Chriſt was firſt to be preach'd, and the Virtue of Chriſt to be made known* ° *in the rude Earth of Perſecutions and Martyrs. Afterwards the bleſſed Virgin was celebrated by many Encomiums of the Fathers, and made illuſtrious by many Miracles, Temples, Feſtivals,* &c. Thus far he. But 1. The *Jeſuit* yields all that we deſire, when he confeſſeth *that thoſe things were ſufficient to have been ſpoken concerning the bleſſed Virgin, which in her reſpected Chriſt.* Nothing more certain. 'Twas the ſetting forth Chriſt, not of his Mother, which was the End and Deſign of the Holy Ghoſt, in the Scriptures of the New Teſtament; and therefore that was ſufficient to be ſpoken of her which ſerv'd to lead us to the Knowledge of, and to Faith in Chriſt. 2. As for the Title of the *Mother of God*, it doth not at all infer any Right the bleſſed Virgin hath to our religious Adoration of

° *In rudi terra Perſecutionum & Martyrum.*

her. By that Relation to the Son of God, she cannot challenge any Share with him in his divine Honour; much less any commanding Power over him, which yet hath been formerly in the publick Offices of the Church of *Rome*, and I am certain is still in some of their private Offices, attributed to her. For tho' she was the Mother of him that was God, yet she contributed nothing to him as God; but he, as such, was and is her God, Lord, Creator and Saviour; to whom therefore she, together with us, pays all humble Adoration and Worship. Nay, she was not his Mother as Man, in so strict a Sense as other Women are Mothers of their Children; for she conceived him not naturally, but by the Help of the divine Spirit overshadowing her: So that her very Conception of him as Man, was immediately due to him as God, and she was eternally bound to praise him for so wonderful an Operation wrought in her. And it is to be observ'd, that the *Ancient Doctors* of the Church, when they contested with Hereticks about

the Title Θεοτόκος, *Mother of God*, design'd not by that Title so much to advance the Honour of the blessed Virgin, as to secure the real and inseparable Union of the two Natures in Christ; and to shew that the human Nature, which Christ took of the holy Virgin, never subsisted separately from the divine Person of the Son of God. 3. His third Reason of this Silence is plainly foolish and absurd, *that her Testimony would have been suspected by the unbelieving World*: for by the same Reason the Scriptures must have been silent concerning Christ himself also. Besides, the Question is not of the Virgin *Mary's* Testimony of her self, but of the Testimony of the Apostles and sacred Writers concerning her. Now certainly it highly concern'd the World to understand how much the blessed Virgin could do with God and his Son, if *by her all Grace be dispens'd*, as the Papists have affirm'd. And the Apostles cannot escape the Censure of gross Negligence, or great Envy, if they knew of any such Convey-

ance of Grace, and yet would not vouchſafe to the World the leaſt Point of their Finger towards it. 4. His fourth and laſt Reaſon is an impious Speculation. For are Chriſt and the bleſſed Virgin join'd together in the Point of religious Worſhip, as the Male and Female Deity, as *Adam* and *Eve* were in their Formation, with this only Difference, that as *Adam* was firſt form'd and after *Eve*, ſo the divine Power of Chriſt was firſt proclaim'd in the World, and afterward the bleſſed Virgin was celebrated and made illuſtrious? Beſides, what a dirty Compariſon is that, whereby he reſembles the primitive Age, the Age of Confeſſors and Martyrs, the *beſt* and moſt *glorious Age* of the *Church*, to the thick and unform'd Earth and Clay, out of which *Adam* was faſhion'd; and the After-Ages to the more refin'd Subſtance of *Adam*, out of which *Eve* was taken? What a dreadful Infatuation muſt it be, that ſhall make Men of great Senſe and Learning otherwiſe, thus to write and ſpeak? Laſtly, How plainly doth the

Jesuit here again yield up the Cause to us? He confesseth, that the Knowledge of Christ alone was at first preach'd in the Days of Persecution and Martyrdom, and that the Celebration of the blessed Virgin (such as is now practis'd in the Church of *Rome*) sprang up afterwards. A most certain Truth; for there is not one Tittle to be found in any genuine Writer of the first three hundred Years after Christ, (to go no farther) that may give any the least Countenance to the Invocation of the blessed Virgin *Mary*, or of any other Saint; but very many most expres Testimonies against it in all of them: And therefore *we are* most certain, that the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome* concerning the Invocation of the blessed Virgin, and the other Saints, was none of the Doctrines delivered by the holy Apostles to the Church of Christ. And for our part, we are content and fully satisfied with that Knowledge of Christ alone, which was preach'd [p] *in*

[p] *In rudi terra Persecutionum & Martyrum.*

the rude Earth of Perſecutions and Martyrs; that is, in the beſt and moſt glorious Ages of the Church: And we willingly leave thoſe after refin'd Diſcoveries of the bleſſed Virgin's Honour to the Papiſts, to follow and embrace them, ſeeing they will not be otherwiſe perſuaded, at their own Peril.

Before I conclude, I will mention ſome few Inſtances of extravagant Honour, which the Papiſts give, but we of the Church of *England* utterly refuſe to yield to the bleſſed Virgin, out of a true Zeal to the Honour of God.

We will not give her laviſh and exceſſive Attributes, beyond what the holy Scriptures allow her, and the holy Men of the Primitive Church afforded her. We will call her *bleſſed*, as the Mother of our Lord, in the Senſe above explain'd. But we dare not call her *Queen of Heaven*, *Queen of Angels*, *Patriarchs*, *Prophets and Apoſtles*, *Source of the Fountain of Grace*, *Refuge of Sinners*, *Comfort of the Afflicted*, *Advocate of all Chriſtians*, as ſhe is called in that Litany of our La-

dy, ſtill us'd in their Devotions. For we have no Inſtance of ſuch Attributes given to the bleſſed Virgin in the holy Scriptures, and they are too big for any meer Creature.

We will not aſcribe thoſe Excellencies to her, that ſhe never had nor could have; as a *Fulneſs of habitual Grace*, more Grace than all the Angels and Archangels of God put together, ever had; that ſhe was born without *original Sin*, and never committed any the leaſt actual Sin, and conſequently never needed a Saviour. Theſe are wild things, which very many of the Papiſts, drunk with Superſtition, ſay of her.

We will not give her the Honour of Invocation, or praying to her, as all the Papiſts do, for the unanſwerable Reaſons abovementioned. Indeed, as long as that one Text of Scripture remains in our Bibles, which we read 1 *Tim.* ii. 5. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus*; we ſhall never be perſuaded by any Sophiſtry or ſubtle Diſtinctions of our Adverſaries,

to

to betake our ſelves to the mediation of the bleſſed Virgin, much leſs of any other Saint.

Much more do we abhor the Impiety of thoſe among the Papiſts, who have held it diſputable, whether the Milk of the bleſſed Virgin, or the Blood of her Son be to be prefer'd; and at laſt could pitch upon no better Reſolution than this, that the Milk and Blood ſhould be mix'd together, and both compound a medicine for their Souls.

We abhor to divide the divine Kingdom and Empire, giving one half, the better half, the Kingdom of Mercy, to the bleſſed Virgin, and leaving only the Kingdom of Juſtice to her Son. This is downright Treaſon againſt the only univerſal King and Monarch of the World.

We are aſtoniſh'd at the Doxology, which ſome great and learned Men of the Church of *Rome* have not been aſham'd to cloſe their printed Books with; *Laus Deo, Deiparæque Virgini*; *Praiſe be to God, and the Virgin-Mother of God.*

We

We ſhould tremble every joint of us, to offer any ſuch recommendation as this to the Virgin *Mary*. Hear if you can without horrour, a Prayer of theirs to her. It is this.

O my Lady, holy Mary, *I recommend my ſelf into thy bleſſed Truſt, and ſingular Cuſtody, and into the boſom of thy Mercy, this Night and evermore, and in the Hour of my Death, as alſo my Soul and my Body; and I yield unto thee all my Hope and Conſolation, all my Diſtreſs and Miſery, my Life and the end thereof, that by thy moſt holy Interceſſion, and by thy Merits, all my Works may be directed and diſpos'd, according to thine and thy Son's Will.* Amen. What fuller expreſſions can we uſe to declare our abſolute Affiance, Truſt and Dependence on the eternal Son of God himſelf, than they here uſe in this Recommendation to the Virgin? Yea, who obſerves not, that the Will of the bleſſed Virgin is expreſly joined with the Will of her Son, as the Rule of our Actions, and that ſo, as that her Will is ſet in the firſt Place. A plain ſmatch of their old

blaſ-

blaſphemous Impiety, in advancing the Mother above the Son, and giving her a commanding Power over Him. Can they have the Face to ſay, that all this is no more, than deſiring the bleſſed Virgin to pray for them, as we deſire the Prayers of one another on Earth? And yet, this Recommendation is to be ſeen in a Manual of Prayers and Litanies Printed at *Antwerp*, no longer ago than 1671, and that *permiſſu ſuperiorum*, in the Evening Prayers for *Friday*. A Book it is to my knowledge commonly to be found in the Hands of our *Engliſh* Papiſts; for I had it from a near Relation of mine, (who had been perverted by the Emiſſaries of *Rome*; but is ſince returned again to the Communion of the Church of *England*) who aſſured me, that ſhe us'd it her ſelf by the direction of her Confeſſor, in her private Devotions.

Laſtly, We abominate the impious Impoſture of thoſe, who have tranſlated the moſt humble and holy Virgin into an Idol of Pride and Vanity, and repre-

ſented

ſented her as a vain-glorious and aſpiring Creature, like *Lucifer* (I tremble at the compariſon) thirſting after divine Worſhip and Honour, and ſeeking out ſuperſtitious Men and Women, whom ſhe may oblige to her more eſpecial Service, and make them her perpetual Votaries. For what greater affront than this could they have offered to her Humility and Sanctity? How fulſome, yea how perfectly loathſome to us are the Tales of thoſe, that have had the Aſſurance to tell us, of the amorous Addreſſes of the bleſſed Virgin to certain perſons her devout Worſhippers, chuſing them for her Husbands, beſtowing her Kiſſes liberally on them, giving them her Breaſts to ſuck, and preſenting them with Bracelets and Rings of her Hair, as Love-Tokens? The Fables of the *Jewiſh* Talmudiſts, yea of *Mahomet* may ſeem grave, ſerious and ſober Hiſtories, compar'd to theſe, and other ſuch like impudent Fictions. In ſo much that wiſe Men have thought that the Authors of theſe Romances in Religion were no better than the Tools and Inſtruments of *Satan*,

tan, uſed by him to expoſe the Chriſtian Religion and render it ridiculous, and thereby to introduce Atheiſm. And indeed we are ſure, that the Wits of *Italy*, where theſe abominable Deceits have been and are chiefly countenanced, were the firſt Broachers and Patrons of Infidelity and Atheiſm in *Europe*, ſince the time that Chriſtianity obtained in it.

In a word, Such is the Worſhip given to the bleſſed Virgin by many in the Church of *Rome*, that they deſerve to be called *Mariani*, rather than *Chriſtiani*, &c.

My Brethren, Let us bleſs God, that we yet breathe in a pure Air, free from the noiſome and peſtilent Fogs of thoſe ſuperſtitious Vanities, where none of thoſe Fooleries and Impieties are obtruded on our Faith or Practice; that we live in a Church, wherein no other Name is invocated but the Name of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt; nor Divine Worſhip given to any but to the one true God, through Jeſus Chriſt the only Mediator. O happy we, if we knew

knew and valued our own Happineſs! But alas! alas! many of us do not. We deſpiſe and trample upon that Reformation of Religion, which by a Miracle of God's Mercy was wrought in this Nation in the days of our Foreſathers, and run to *Schiſmatical Aſſemblies* under pretence of ſeeking after a better Reformation. We abandon that Church, and can hardly forbear to call it Antichriſtian and Popiſh Harlot, the Foundation-Stones whereof were laid and cemented in the Blood of God's holy Martyrs, that died in Defiance of the Errors and Superſtitions of the *Romiſh* Synagogue. And yet theſe Men call themſelves *Proteſtants*, yea the only *true Proteſtants*, and will ſcarce allow us of the Church of *England*, a ſhare in the Title. God grant, that by this our horrid Ingratitude, we do not provoke him to recal that Mercy, which our ſelves indeed throw back into his Face, as if it were not worth our acceptance, and to cauſe a dark Night of Popery to return on us; wherein a ſuper-

stitious, and idolatrous Worship shall be thrust upon us, yea and we shall be compell'd to forbidden and idolatrous Worship, or to Death; wherein our Bibles, that we now, not only with Liberty, but Encouragement carry about us, shall be snatch'd out of our Hands, and fabulous lying Legends put in the room of them; wherein our excellent Liturgy in a Tongue we all understand, which many of us now loath, and call pitiful Pottage, yea and Popish Mass, shall be abolish'd, and the abominable *Roman* Mass indeed plac'd in its stead; wherein the Cup of Blessing in the holy Eucharist shall be sacrilegiously taken from us, which is now openly and freely held forth to us all, and that in so excellent a way of Administration, that the whole Christian World beside is not able at this day to shew the like; but we scorn to take it, and refuse to receive it, unless it be given us by an *unhallowed Hand* in a *factious Conventicle* If ever these and the other ill effects of Popery, which I cannot now mention, happen to us; (which God avert;

and I truſt it will never come to paſs; But, I ſay, if ever theſe things ſhould befal us, we ſhould then, when it is too late, clearly diſtinguiſh between Light and Darkneſs, and diſcern the vaſt difference between the eſtabliſhed Religion which many now call Popery, and Popery it ſelf. We ſhould then caſt back a kind and mournful Eye upon our dear Mother the Church of *England*, whoſe very Bowels we now tear and rip up by our wicked Schiſms. We ſhould then wiſh our ſelves in the ſafe Arms of her Communion once again, and reſolve never more to depart from it. Let us do that now, whilſt it is ſeaſonable, which we ſhall then wiſh we had done, but cannot do.

But I return to my Text, and ſhall for a Concluſion of my Diſcourſe on it, obſerve, that both it and the whole *Magnificat* or Song of the bleſſed Virgin, is applicable to, and may be made uſe of by, all true Chriſtians. For,

I. The Nature which the Son of God aſſumed of his Virgin Mother, is our

common Nature, which is by that aſſumption tranſcendently, to our own Amazement and the Admiration of Angels, dignify'd and advanc'd. The eternal Word by his Incarnation or being made Fleſh, intended not directly to honour the bleſſed Virgin in particular, but Mankind in general. He intended thereby to declare us his Brethren, by being made of the ſame Fleſh and Blood that we are, as the divine Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* aſſures us, *Chap.* ii. *ver.* 14. *Foraſmuch then as the Children are partakers of Fleſh and Blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame.* And *ver.* 17. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his Brethren.* In a word, the Son of God therefore honoured the bleſſed Virgin ſo far, as in, and from her to become Man, that he might advance human Nature, by aſſuming it into the Unity of his divine Perſon; and that being born of her, he might procure not only hers, but our common Salvation. So that every one of us may ſing the *Magnificat*, and bear a part in this

this divine Anthem, and, *mutatis mutandis*, ſay: *My Soul doth magnifie the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoyced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low Eſtate of us vile and mortal Men, his poor Servants and Vaſſals. For behold from henceforth, and upon the account of the Incarnation of the Son of God, the whole Creation, yea the very Angels themſelves ſhall and do proclaim us bleſſed. For he that is mighty hath magnifi'd us in the higheſt Degree, by uniting himſelf to our Nature, and therefore holy is, and for ever bleſſed be his Name.* And therefore the holy Virgin, preſently after my Text, celebrates the Mercy ſhewn to her, as common to all the Sons of Men in all Ages, that do not by their Diſobedience and Ingratitude, render themſelves utterly unworthy of it. *Ver.* 50. *And his Mercy is on them that fear him from Generation to Generation, or throughout all Generations.*

Wherefore moſt lamentable is the Ignorance and Folly of our Diſſenters, who deſpiſe the uſe of this excellent

Song in the daily Service of our Church, as unedifying, as impertinent and not belonging to them, and proper only to the bleſſed Virgin, and therefore refuſe to ſtand up, and bear a part in the Reherſal of it. Certainly they are very ill taught and inſtructed, who underſtand not, that all Chriſtians may and ought moſt heartily to join in this divine Hymn. For,

II. The Bleſſedneſs of the holy Virgin is not ſo altogether proper to her, or incommunicable to others, but that the meaneſt ſincere Chriſtian may ſhare with her in the better part of it. Wonderful and full of Comfort are the words of our Saviour, *Luke* xi. Where when a certain Woman, hearing his excellent Diſcourſe, cried out, *Bleſſed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou haſt ſucked*, ver. 27. Our Saviour anſwers, *ver.* 28. *Yea rather bleſſed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.* Which is not a negation of the Bleſſedneſs of his Mother, (for that would be a plain contradiction to my Text) but

a correction of the Woman's miſtake, who ſo admired the Bleſſedneſs of the Mother of ſuch a Son, that ſhe ſcarce thought of any other Bleſſedneſs. Our Saviour therefore tells her, *That bleſſed are they alſo, yea and chiefly, that hear the word of God, and keep it.* And in another place, our gracious Lord being told, that his Mother and Brethren deſired to ſpeak with him, gave this ſhort anſwer: *Who is my Mother, and who are my Brethren? And he ſtretched forth his Hands towards his Diſciples, and ſaid, Behold my Mother and my Brethren: For whoſoever ſhall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the ſame is my Brother and Siſter and Mother,* Mat. xii. *ver* 48,49,50. Where I think there is a mighty *Emphaſis* in thoſe words of our Saviour, *my Father which is in Heaven*; as if he had ſaid, you *Jews* think of me as a meer Man, and underſtand not any other Relation that I have, beſides that which is according to the Fleſh; but know ye that I am of a higher Original, even the eternal Son of the eternal God dwelling in

Heaven; and as ſuch I own no Relation but what is ſpiritual, and every obedient Diſciple of mine, is to me as a Brother, or Siſter, or Mother. Indeed, the Virgin her ſelf was more bleſſed by conceiving Chriſt in her Heart by Faith, than by conceiving him in her Womb. And in this her chiefeſt Bleſſedneſs the meaneſt Chriſtian, that is a ſincere one, may be a ſharer with her. Chriſt may be thus form'd, nay he muſt be ſo in every one that ſhall be ſaved, *Gal* iv. *ver.* 19. And if we be true Chriſtians, though all Generations do not call us bleſſed, as the holy Virgin, yet together with her we ſhall be indeed bleſſed beyond all Generations, even for ever and ever.

To God the Father Son and Holy Ghoſt, be given and aſcribed all Honour and Glory, all religious Worſhip and Adoration, now and for evermore. Amen.

SER-

SERMON V.

St. *Paul*'s Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of *Satan*, ſent to prevent his being exalted above meaſure, conſidered and explained; with ſeveral practical Obſervations drawn from that Subject.

2 Cor. xii. *Ver.* 7, 8, 9.

And leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure, through the Abundance of the Revelations, there was given to me a

Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan, to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure. For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me; and he ſaid unto me, my Grace is ſufficient for thee, for my Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs. Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in my Infirmities, that the Power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.

SAint *Paul*, of all the Apoſtles of Chriſt, met with the greateſt Oppoſition and Contempt from the falſe Judaizing Apoſtles, that troubled the Church in his Time. The true Reaſon whereof was, that he firſt of all openly and every where proclaim'd and preach'd the utter Abolition of the *Moſaick* Law, both as to *Jews* and

and *Gentiles.* But the Pretence ſeems to be this, that he was none of the twelve Apoſtles, called by Chriſt himſelf when on Earth; nor afterwards duly elected an Apoſtle in the room of any of that Number, as *Matthias* was: But an odd thirteenth Apoſtle, thruſting himſelf into that ſacred Office, they knew not how, or by what Authority. For the Relation of Chriſt's glorious Appearance to him from Heaven, and ſending him to preach his Goſpel among the *Gentiles*, (which indeed was a higher Call than any of the other Apoſtles had) doubtleſs they rejected as a meer Fiction: tho' the viſible Effect of that Apparition, his ſtrange and ſudden Alteration and Change from a violent Perſecutor, to be a Preacher of the Goſpel, yea and willingly to be perſecuted for it, was of it ſelf ſufficient to convince all ſober and unprejudic'd Perſons of the certain Truth of it.

Againſt theſe Calumniators he ſtrenuouſly vindicates his divine Miſſion and Authority in the two preceding, in this, and in the following Chapters. In Purſuance of

which

which Deſign, he is conſtrain'd to do that, which in it ſelf, and preſcinded from the Circumſtances he was in, had been Sin and Folly, that is, to commend himſelf. And he excellently and fully demonſtrates, that he was not in any reſpect inferior to the very chiefeſt of the Apoſtles; neither in his Sufferings, nor in his Miracles, nor in his generous Charity and unwearied Diligence in the Diſcharge of his Office, nor in the Succeſs of it; nay, that in the three things laſt mentioned he exceeded all the other Apoſtles; nor in the Point of Revelations made known to him.

And upon this laſt Head he inſiſts in the beginning of this Chapter, out of which my Text is taken; where he ſpeaks of admirable Viſions and Revelations he had receiv'd from God at ſeveral Times, once in the *third* or *higheſt Heaven*, and another time in *Paradiſe*, *ver.* 2, 3, 4. The ὑπερβολὴ, the *exceeding Greatneſs* or Excellency of theſe Revelations he declares to be ſuch, that he was in Danger by them to be tranſported beyond the Bounds of Sobri-

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ety and Modeſty, into Pride and Vanity, had not God in his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, by a very ſevere Diſcipline on his Fleſh or Body, prevented that undue Elation of his Mind. Which Diſcipline he farther ſhews, the gracious God thought neceſſary, for the ſame reaſon, ſtill to continue on him, notwithſtanding his earneſt repeated and reiterated Prayers and Supplications for the Removal of it; only aſſuring him, that his Grace ſhould be ſufficient for him, and that his Strength ſhould be made perfect in that Weakneſs of his; and that thereupon he fully acquieſc'd in the good Will and Pleaſure of God, yea and rejoiced and gloryed in that ſharp Chaſtiſement. *And leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure*, &c.

For the underſtanding of which Text, we are to enquire into theſe three things. I. What is meant in thoſe words of St *Paul*, *leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure.* II. What we are to underſtand by the *Thorn in the Fleſh.* III. What by the *Meſſenger of Satan, ſent to buffet the Apoſtle.*

Firſt

I. Let us enquire what is meant in thoſe words of St. *Paul*, *leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure*; for that is queſtion'd by ſome. *Photius* in *OEcumenius*, underſtands the words, not of St. *Paul*'s being over much exalted in his own Conceit, but of his being too much extoll'd in the Eſteem and Praiſes of others. And *Theophylact* alſo mentions the ſame Interpretation, tho' he himſelf utterly diſlikes it. Indeed the *Greek* will bear it well enough; for ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, may not unfitly be tranſlated *leſt I ſhould be too much extoll'd*, that is, magnify'd by others. And of this he expreſly ſpeaks in the Verſe immediately preceding, *leſt any Man ſhould think of me above that which he ſeeth me to be.* And it ſeems a very good and pious Deſign to endeavour to excuſe the excellent Apoſtle from ſo ſhameful an Infirmity, as a Propenſion to Pride. But yet this Interpretation is by no means to be admitted. For 1. All the moſt ancient Doctors of the Church, with one Conſent underſtand the words as we do, of St. *Paul*'s being in Danger

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to be too much lifted up in his own Conceit. So *Irenæus* in his fifth Book, *Chap.* 3. tells us, that the words of the Apoſtle here ſignifie [q] *being lifted up to fall from the Truth*; and [r] *to be exalted againſt God, and preſumptuouſly to aſſume Glory to one's ſelf.* And ſo all the reſt of the *Fathers*, who are herein followed by a full Stream of modern Interpreters. And to oppoſe ſo general a Conſent, would ſavour ſomething of that Sin of Pride in our ſelves, which we endeavour to excuſe St. *Paul* from a Propenſion to. 2. It is not ſo reaſonable to conceive that St. *Paul* ſhould be ſo ſeverely afflicted, and thus buffeted to prevent the Sin of others, as that he ſhould ſuffer ſo much to prevent or cure a Sin of his own. 3. The Exaltation ſpoken of in the Text, is plainly expreſs'd as an Effect likely to have immediately happen'd from thoſe Viſions and Revelations, which St. *Paul* receiv'd in ſecret, and which were not known to others, 'till he thus declar'd

[q] *Elatum excidere a veritate.*
[r] *Extolli adverſus Deum, & preſumptionem ſuæ gloriæ aſſumere.*

them. The Danger therefore he ſpeaks of, was to himſelf, and not to others. 4. As for the Context, if it be more cloſely conſider'd, it doth not neceſſarily confirm the other Interpretation. For of the Connection of my Text with what went before, a clear Account may be given without it. For the Apoſtle having ſaid, he would forbear to inſiſt on his Revelations, leſt if he ſhould ſet them forth to the full, other Men might be tempted to think too highly of him; he proceeds in the Text to ſhew, that the Revelations were indeed ſo great and excellent, that he himſelf, after he had receiv'd them, was in danger of being tranſported into Pride, if God had not adminiſter'd an effectual Remedy to prevent that Diſtemper of his Mind. Beſides, having, *ver.* 5. ſaid, that he would rather *glory in* his *Infirmities*, than in his Revelations; in the Text he accordingly ſpeaks of thoſe Infirmities, and that as they were on purpoſe inflicted on him by God, to keep him from glorying too much in the Revelations he had received.

5 Laſtly,

Laſtly, Tho' St. *Paul* were an excellent Apoſtle, yet he was ſtill but a Man, and a Man on Earth, not yet in Heaven, a *Viator* not a *Comprehenſor*, a Proficient, not yet fully perfect, or ſo immutably confirm'd in Virtue, as to be out of all Danger of the Sin of Pride, which even the Angels of Heaven fell into. Hence *Theophylact* having thus paraphras'd the words of St. *Paul*, [r] *Leſt I ſhould be vain-glorious*, preſently ſubjoins; [s] *for St. Paul himſelf alſo was a Man.* The commonly receiv'd Interpretation therefore here, is undoubtedly the trueſt.

II. Our ſecond Enquiry is, *what is meant by the Thorn in the Fleſh.* The Greek word σκόλοψ ſignifies *quicquid acuminatum eſt, any thing that is ſharp pointed*, as a Goad, or Stake, or Arrow, or Thorn, or the like; which being fixed in the Fleſh or Body, is very painful and troubleſome. It is a Metaphor; and what the thing is St. *Paul* intended by it, is the great Queſtion. I ſhall ſet be-

[r] Ἵνα μὴ κενοδοξῶ.
[s] Ἄνθρωπος δὲ ἦν καὶ αὐτός.

fore

fore you the ſeveral Interpretations of Expoſitors, rejecting thoſe which I have evident Reaſons to conclude falſe, and eſtabliſhing that which I think to be the true one.

Firſt, Some by the *Thorn in the Fleſh* underſtand *thoſe Troubles, Afflictions and Perſecutions, which St.* Paul *ſuffered, and wherewith he was continually moleſted in the preaching of the Goſpel.* But I do not think this to be the Meaning of the Apoſtle, for theſe Reaſons. 1. The *Thorn in the Fleſh* he ſpeaks of, ſeems to be ſome Trouble more peculiar to himſelf, and adapted to his particular Circumſtances; whereas Troubles and Perſecutions for the ſake of the Goſpel, were common to him with all the reſt of the Apoſtles; and yet we hear not a word of any *Thorn in the Fleſh*, given to any of them. 2. Troubles and Perſecutions for the Goſpel, are too general a thing to agree to the Expreſſions in the Text, which are more particular, and plainly denote ſome ſpecial Trouble or Evil, wherewith St. *Paul* was exerciſed. For it is ſaid in

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the ſingular Number, a *Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan.* To evade which Argument, ſome have anſwer'd, that here is meant ſome one particular and more notable Adverſary of the Apoſtle, that continually ſet himſelf to oppoſe and perſecute him, as *Alexander* the Copper-Smith, or the like. But it were vain to conceive, that either *Alexander* the Copper-Smith, or any other Adverſary of St. *Paul*, ſhould continually dog him at the Heels whitherſoever he went, and be a perpetual Vexation to him, as the Thorn he ſpeaks of was. Beſides, the Thorn is ſaid to have its Seat in the Fleſh or Body of St. *Paul*, and therefore was ſome inherent Grief in himſelf, and not any external Trouble from without. 3. The *Thorn in the Fleſh* St. *Paul* ſpeaks of, was not given him till after his being caught up into the third Heaven, and into Paradiſe; whereas St. *Paul*'s Troubles and Perſecutions for the Goſpel ſake, commenc'd from his very firſt giving up his Name to Chriſt. 4. It became not St. *Paul* to pray ſo earneſtly and ſo often,

to have his Perſecutions remov'd from him, who could not but know, that they were his allotted Portion, bequeath'd to him in his very firſt Converſion, *Acts* ix. *ver.* 16, yea, and that all who ſhould then *live godly* in *Jeſus Chriſt*, were of neceſſity *to ſuffer Perſecution*, 2 *Tim.* iii. *ver.* 12. The chiefeſt Colour for this Interpretation is, that St. *Paul* doth indeed preſently after make mention alſo of his Perſecutions and Diſtreſſes for the Goſpel ſake, *ver.* 10. But of this I ſhall give a very clear and ſatisfactory Account afterwards in this Diſcourſe.

Secondly, Some by the *Thorn in the Fleſh* underſtand *uredinem libidinis*, which I am ſham'd to tranſlate. Yet it being a very common Expoſition, it will be neceſſary to ſhew the great Abſurdity and Folly of it. 1. This Interpretation contradicts the plain and expreſs Profeſſion of St. *Paul* concerning himſelf, that he had the Gift of Continence, and that in ſo eminent a Degree, that he wiſh'd all Chriſtians were in this like himſelf, 1 *Cor.* vii.

ver. 7. 2. If this had been the *Thorn in the Fleſh* St. *Paul* was troubled with, he had a Remedy at hand, the ſame he propos'd to others, and which he tells us he might himſelf have made uſe of as well as ſome other of the Apoſtles, if he had ſeen occaſion for it, *viz.* honeſt and honourable Matrimony, 1 *Cor.* vii. *ver.* 9. and ix. *ver.* 5. 3. St. *Paul* when he wrote this Epiſtle, was, by the Computation of Chronologers, about ſixty Years old. And 'tis a foul Slur to ſo great and holy an Apoſtle, to imagine, that he ſhould burn in that frozen Age, which uſeth to extinguiſh, or at leaſt to allay thoſe Flames in the moſt unclean Perſons. 4. If this had been St. *Paul's Thorn in the Fleſh*, he could not without Blaſphemy have ſaid of it, ἐδόθη μοι, *it was given me*, *viz.* by God, the ſame gracious God, who in giving it intended to keep me from being undone by Pride. The Sparks of Luſt iſſue from Hell, and lead alſo to thoſe unquenchable Flames. 5. If this had been the *Thorn in the Fleſh*, St. *Paul* would have pray'd for the Removal of it,

not only thrice, but a thouſand Times; yea he would never have given over, till by an unwearied Importunity, he had obtain'd his Deſire; and the moſt holy God would not, could not have deny'd him ſo juſt and holy a Requeſt. Laſtly, St. *Paul*'s *Thorn in the Fleſh* was ſomething, wherewith, when he was deny'd the Removal of it, he not only reſted contented, but even *gloried in it*, *v.* 9. Now it had been the greateſt Impiety in him to have gloried in his impure Motions and Deſires. And this ſame Reaſon equally overthrows all thoſe other Interpretations, that expound the Text of any other ſinful Affection or Infirmity in St. *Paul*. But let us proceed.

Thirdly, Others by the *Thorn in the Fleſh* underſtand *Original Sin*, or the Reliques of it in St. *Paul*. But this Interpretation likewiſe we may boldly pronounce abſurd, not only for the Reaſon laſt mention'd, but upon other accounts alſo. For 1. Original Sin was not given to St. *Paul* by God: Nor 2. Was it given after his Rapture into the third Heaven,

and into Paradiſe; but it was, howſoever you define it, born with him.

Fourthly, Some there are, that by the *Thorn in the Fleſh*, underſtand *Solicitations to Pride*. But this is the moſt ſenſeleſs Interpretation of all. For beſides that, 1. This could not be ſaid to be given by God. Nor 2. Could it be call'd a *Thorn in the Fleſh*, Pride being a Vice ſeated in the Mind. 3. This Interpretation implies a manifeſt Contradiction. For Pride was the Diſeaſe to be cur'd in St. *Paul*, and therefore could not be it ſelf the Cure or Remedy.

Fifthly, and laſtly, Others expound the *Thorn in the Fleſh* of ſome *bodily Diſeaſe* in St. *Paul*, extraordinary painful and troubleſome to him; which he aptly calls a *Thorn*, for its Sharpneſs and Pungency; and a *Thorn in* his *Fleſh*, for the Seat of it, which was his Body. This is the conſentient Interpretation of the moſt ancient Doctors of the Church, who have happen'd to make mention of this Text. And they are the moſt likely Men to have underſtood the Hiſtory of St. *Paul*,

and what (at leaſt extraordinarily) happen'd to him. *Irenæus* in his fifth Book, *Chap.* 3. cites my Text, and expreſly expounds the *Thorn in the Fleſh*, of ſome *bodily Infirmity* of the Apoſtle, ſuch as might ſhew him to be a mortal Man. For after he had alledg'd my Text, he thus gloſſeth upon it. [u] *What therefore, (may ſome ſay) would the Lord then have his Apoſtle ſo buffeted, and to undergo ſuch an Infirmity? Yea, ſaith the word: for Strength is perfected in Weakneſs. For how could Man have learnt, that he himſelf is infirm, and by Nature mortal, and God immortal and powerful, unleſs he had experimented what is in both?* that is, both the Infirmity of Man, and the Power of God? And he applies this to the Error of thoſe, [x] *Who look upon the Infirmity of the Fleſh or Body of Man; but*

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[u] *Quid ergo? (dicat enim aliquis) voluit ergo Dominus Apoſtolum ſuum ſic colaphizari, & talem ſuſtinere infirmitatem? Etiam dicit verbum: Virtus enim in infirmitate perficitur. Quemadmodum enim didiciſſet homo quoniam ipſe quidem infirmus & natura mortalis; Deus autem immortalis & potens, niſi id quod eſt in utroque didiciſſet experimento?*

[x] *Qui infirmitatem intuentur carnis, virtutem autem ejus qui ſuſcitat eam a mortuis non contemplantur.*

do

do not conſider the Power of him who raiſeth it from the Dead. *Tertullian* in his Book *De Pudicitia*, Chap. 13. ſpeaking of St. *Paul's Thorn in the Fleſh*, and his being buffeted, adds [y] *by a pain, as they ſay, in his Ear or Head.* Where it is obſervable, that he delivers this not as his own Conceit, but as a received Tradition in his time. St. *Cyprian*, in his Book *De Mortalitate*, underſtands St. *Paul's Thorn in the Fleſh*, to be [z] *many and grievous Torments of his Fleſh and Body.* And St. *Jerom* alſo, in his Notes upon *Gal.* iv. *ver.* 13. aſſures us, that this was the ancient Tradition. [a] *They report*, (ſaith he) *that he often ſuffer'd a moſt grievous pain in his Head, and that this was the Meſſenger of Satan given him to buffet him.* I will not determine what particular Sickneſs or Infirmity of Body St. *Paul* was troubled with; whether a violent *Head-Ach*, which as you have ſeen, was the ancient Tradi-

[y] *Per dolorem, ut aiunt, auriculæ vel capitis.*

[z] *Carnis & corporis multa & gravia tormenta.*

[a] *Tradunt eum graviſſimum capitis dolorem ſæpe perpeſſum, & hunc eſſe Satanæ angelum, qui appoſitus ei fuerit, ut ipſum colaphizaret.*

tion; or the *Cholick*, as *Aquinas* upon the Place tells us, ſome thought; or the *Falling-Sickneſs*, as others have imagin'd; (a fit Diſeaſe indeed to cure an aſpiring Pride) but it ſeems plain and evident to me, that ſome bodily Sickneſs or Infirmity it was. For

1. In the Anſwer of God to St. *Paul's* Prayers for the removal of *his Thorn in the Fleſh*, it is expreſly ſaid, [b] *For my Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs.* Where it is known, the *Greek* Word ἀσθένεια, literally and moſt properly ſignifies *Infirmity or Weakneſs of Body.* And why we ſhould here depart from the propriety of the word, I underſtand not. It is true, in the next Verſe, after the mention of Infirmity, it preſently follows, *in Reproaches, in Neceſſities, in Perſecutions, in Diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake.* But this is not added exegetically, or by way of Expoſition, but by Accumulation: As if he had ſaid, This my bodily Infirmity, though attended with many other

[b] Ἡ γὰρ δύναμις μου ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται.

grie-

grievous and ſharp Afflictions and Perſecutions, I bear by the Grace of God, yea and take pleaſure in it and them. And accordingly St. *Cyprian* occaſionally Diſcourſing on the Text, in the place but now cited, joins St. *Paul's*, [c] *many and grievous Torments of Body* with his other Calamities, with his Sufferings and Perſecutions.

2. St. *Paul* himſelf plainly enough confirms this Interpretation of the Ancients, *Gal.* iv. *ver.* 13, 14. *Ye know how through Infirmity of the Fleſh, I preached the Goſpel unto you at the firſt. And my Temptation which was in my Fleſh ye deſpiſed not, nor rejected; but receiv'd me as an Angel of God, even as Chriſt Jeſus.* There is little doubt to be made but that St. *Paul's* [d] *Thorn in his Fleſh*, and his [e] *Temptation in his Fleſh*, are one and the ſame thing. Now *his Temptation in his Fleſh* he expreſly here expounds to be, [f] *an Infirmity of his Fleſh*, or Body. And it is obſervable, that he

[c] *Corporis multa & gravia tormenta.*
[d] Σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκὶ.
[e] Ὁ πειρασμὸς ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ.
[f] Ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς.

ſpeaks

ſpeaks of ſuch an *Infirmity of his Fleſh*, as was notorious, open and viſible to the *Galatians*, and therefore ſuch as, if they had not looked any farther than his Fleſh, or Body, they might have deſpiſed him for. This one conſideration cloſely attended to, utterly overthrows all the other Interpretations, and confirms the laſt Expoſition of the ancient Doctors, which I follow.

St. *Paul's Thorn in his Fleſh*, or *his Temptation in his Fleſh*, could not be any inward motion of Original Sin, or irritation to Uncleanneſs, or ſuggeſtion of Pride, it being ſomething outward and apparent to the *Galatians*. Nor could it be his Sufferings and Perſecutions for the Goſpel's ſake. For theſe all of them could not without a very great Impropriety, be called the *Infirmity of his Fleſh, or Body*. Nor could they with any colour of Reaſon, make him deſpicable in the Eyes of the *Galatians*, but rather on the contrary they muſt needs render him more honourable and glorious; when at the ſame time they ſaw the Preacher of the Go-

ſpel

ſpel to them, a ſtout and courageous Confeſſor for that Goſpel, which he preached. Nor could this *Thorn* and *Temptation in his Fleſh* be any ſecret aſſaults of *Satan* upon his Body or Mind; (as ſome from the Appellation given it, *the Meſſenger of Satan*, have collected) for theſe were not viſible to the *Galatians*, or others. It remains therefore, that it was ſome extraordinary bodily Infirmity of St. *Paul*, that he carried about him, which might have render'd him deſpicable in the Eyes of the *Galatians* and others, to whom he preached the Goſpel, if they had not at the ſame time ſeen the Power of God appearing in the Miracles he wrought, and in the Excellency of his Doctrine, and in his other Virtues. And it is very probable that the Infirmity of his Body, which thus continually haunted him, was interpreted by his malicious Adverſaries to be a Judgment of God upon him.

Laſtly, St. *Paul* himſelf again elſewhere informs us, that he was generally deſpiſed by the Adverſaries of his Preaching, upon the account of ſome notable

notable bodily Weakneſs, or Infirmity of his. For he repreſents the falſe Apoſtles as thus objecting againſt him. *His Letters*, ſay they, *are weighty and powerful; but his bodily preſence is weak, and his Speech contemptible*, 2 Cor. x. *ver.* 10. Where it is in the *Greek* his bodily preſence is ἀσθενὴς infirm, weak or ſickly, and his Speech contemptible; as there are many bodily Diſeaſes, that have a great influence on the Speech, and render it leſs grateful and acceptable. And the ſame bodily Infirmity, he in divers other places mentions, as the great diſadvantage which he laboured under in the preaching of the Goſpel. See eſpecially 1 *Cor.* ii. *ver.* 3. *And I was with you in Weakneſs, and in Fear, and in much Trembling.* And 2 *Cor.* xiii. *ver.* 3, 4, 9. *Since ye ſeek a proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. Examine your ſelves whether ye be in the Faith, prove your own ſelves: know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be Reprobates. For we are glad when we are weak,*

weak, and ye are ſtrong; and this alſo we wiſh, even your Perfection. By all which it ſeems to me very plain, that St. *Paul* had ſome notorious viſible Infirmity in his Body, that might expoſe him to Contempt with thoſe, who looked no farther than the outward Appearance, and was deſigned by God as a means to keep him humble. He was a weak, ſickly Apoſtle; and therefore deſpicable to many. In this alſo like his genuine Son *Timothy*, to whom he gives this advice: *Drink no longer Water, but Drink a little Wine, for thy Stomach's ſake,* [g] *and for thy often Infirmities*, 1 Tim. v. *ver.* 23. There was this difference between the Infirmity of the one and the other, that St. *Paul*'s was extraordinary and ſupernatural; but *Timothy*'s an effect of his natural Conſtitution. Which brings me to the third Enquiry.

In the *third* and *laſt* place therefore, We are to enquire, what St. *Paul* means by the *Meſſenger of Satan.* And here it is

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[g] Καὶ διὰ τὰς πυκνάς σου ἀσθενείας.

agreed

agreed by the generality of Interpreters, that this ſignifies the ſame thing with the former, *viz. the Thorn in the Fleſh.* And indeed in the *Greek*, as well as in our Tranſlation, there is no Conjunction, but a plain Appoſition; it is not ſaid, *a Thorn in the Fleſh and a Meſſenger of Satan; but a Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan.* Now we have evidently ſhewn, that St. *Paul's Thorn in his Fleſh*, was ſome troubleſome Diſeaſe in his Body. It remains therefore, that we enquire, why this bodily Diſeaſe is call'd, ἄγγελος Σατᾶν, *the Meſſenger of Satan.* The learned *Grotius* here anſwers in ſhort, becauſe it was, [h] *a Diſeaſe*, by God's permiſſion and appointment, *ſent or inflicted on him by Satan.* And I doubt not but he is in the right. For it was an ancient Opinion of the *Jews*, that many Diſeaſes are without natural Cauſes inflicted on Men by evil Angels. Nor is it any wonder, that *Satan* ſhould have ſuch a Power, by God's Permiſſion,

[h] *Morbus a Satana immiſſus.*

over

over the Bodies of the beſt of Men, to him that reads the Hiſtory of *Job*, the moſt perfect Man of his Age, *Job* ii. *ver.* 6, 7. *And the Lord ſaid unto Satan, behold he is in thy hand, but ſave his life. So Satan went forth from the preſence of the Lord, and ſmote Job with ſore Boils, from the ſole of his Foot unto his Crown.* But there is a Text alſo in the New Teſtament, that plainly warrants this Expoſition. We read *Luke* xiii. *ver.* 11. of a Woman, who had *a Spirit of Infirmity for eighteen Years together*, an extraordinary Infirmity, whereby her Body was doubled, and ſo bowed together, that in all that time ſhe could in no wiſe lift up her ſelf.

That this was a ſupernatural Affliction is plain from the words of our Saviour, *ver.* 16. *And ought not this Woman, being a Daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo theſe eighteen Years, be looſed from this Bond?* Here we have a bodily Infirmity continuing upon a Daughter of *Abraham*, for eighteen Years together, and this Infirmity attributed to the Pow-

er (permitted him by God) of *Satan*. And my Text tells us of one of the moſt excellent Sons of *Abraham*, continually vex'd with a bodily Infirmity, and that the *Meſſenger of Satan*. The good Woman was in her Infirmity bound by *Satan* for eighteen Years: St. *Paul* in his Infirmity was buffeted by *Satan*, (as it is very probable) to the end of his Life.

And ſo much for the Explanation of my Text. Wherein I have been of neceſſity ſo large, that I have little time left me for the handling of the uſeful Obſervations that may be drawn from it. But indeed ſuch a Text thoroughly open'd, yields of it ſelf profitable matter enough to entertain the intelligent Hearer, that knows how to improve it. Yet for the Help of the weaker ſort, give me leave to point out ſome Obſervations that naturally flow from the Text thus explain'd.

Obſerv. 1. *The beſt of Men, thoſe that excel in the Gifts and Graces of God, are liable to the worſt of Vices*, viz. *Pride*.

Mr.

Mr. *Calvin's* Note on my Text, is very appoſite; [i] *Let us diligently conſider who it is that here ſpeaks. A Man that had conquered infinite Dangers, Torments, and other Evils, that had triumph'd over all the Enemies of Chriſt; that had ſhook off the Fear of Death; and laſtly, had renounc'd the World; and yet this Man had not as yet wholly ſubdued his Inclinations to Pride: Nay, he was ſtill engag'd in ſo doubtful a Combat with it, that he could not conquer without being himſelf beaten and buffeted.* Pride, as it was the firſt Sin of Man, ſo it is his laſt too; and is therefore not unfitly called by one *induſium animæ*, the Vice that ſticks moſt cloſely to us, and the laſt we ſhall put off and be rid of.

Other Vices are found only in evil Actions, but this ariſeth out of our beſt Works. Nay, this Sin oft-times ſprings out of its contrary Vertue, and a Man is apt to be proud of his own Humility; and the humble Man, as ſoon as he

[i] *Conſideremus diligenter quis hic loquatur*, &c.

knows his own Humility, is in danger of losing it.

When a Man hath arrived to the top of all Vertue, he is not out of all danger of this Vice; nay, he is then in most danger of it. [k] *It is a rare thing to excel many, and to despise none.* It is a hard Matter for a Man to be cried up for an eminent Saint, and an excellent Person, and not to let in through his Ears into his Soul the Infection of Pride and Vanity. Few Men have such steady Heads as to be able to stand upon the Spires and Pinnacles of Glory without Giddiness.

It was the Sin of Pride, as *Divines* generally believe, that ruin'd a Multitude of the Angelick Host. Those once most glorious Spirits, walking upon the Battlements of Heaven, grew dizzy with their own Greatness, and fell down into a State of utter Darkness and extreme Misery. Upon whose Fall one observes, that Pride is a Vice highly de-

[k] *Rarum est multis præeminere & neminem despicere.*

scended,

ſcended, and commonly entail'd on the moſt high-born and excellent Minds; becauſe it was firſt born in Heaven, and conceiv'd in the Womb of an Angel's Mind. Let us therefore (being taught by theſe Examples) ſo war with all other Luſts and Vices, as to bend our chiefeſt Force againſt this Sin of Pride; and when we have done our beſt, we ſhall find the Conqueſt difficult enough.

But are the beſt of Saints, the moſt excellent Perſons, *only* ſubject to this worſt of Vices? No, certainly; for Pride is nothing elſe but an over-weening Opinion of a Man's own Excellence; and ſuch an Opinion they may and often do entertain, who have no real Excellence in themſelves. The Beggar may dream that he is a King, and the Fool may entertain himſelf in his Paradiſe, though it be a meer Creature of his own fooliſh Fancy. Yea there are ſome, who are proud by a kind of Creation, that is, proud of nothing. But how intolerable, how utterly inexcuſable is this kind of Pride! That ſuch a

Man as St. *Paul*, the great *Thaumaturgus* or Wonder-worker, the moſt learned and laborious of all the Apoſtles, the Doctor of the *Gentiles*, the Man of the higheſt Revelations, the Gueſt of Paradiſe and of the third Heaven, in both which he was entertained with the Diſcovery of unutterable Myſteries; that ſuch a Man as this ſhould be tempted to Pride, is not ſo wonderful, though in him Pride would have been a grievous Sin. How inſufferable then is their Pride, who come infinitely ſhort of any ſuch Excellencies, and yet are *actually* as proud as St. *Paul* was only in danger to be? What a Prodigy of Pride is he, that thinks himſelf to be ſomething (yea and μέγας τις, *ſome great one too*) when he is nothing? as St. *Paul* expreſſeth it *Gal.* vi. *ver.* 3.

If it would have been a Fault in that great Apoſtle, to have been lifted up in his own Conceit, though advanced by God to ſo very high a perfection of Science and Sanctity; what a Crime is it in us to be exalted by Self-opinion, who indeed creep in the Duſt, and have ſo lit-

tle or nothing, either of intellectual or moral Endowments to pride our ſelves in, who know ſo little, and practiſe much leſs?

What a ſad Sight is it to behold a young *Novice*, having read a dry Syſtem in *Theology*, and attained to ſome Remembrance of the common Objections and Solutions therein, ſtrutting as if he had already reach'd the very top of that lofty and ſublime Science, and were become the moſt conſummate and complete Divine?

But how much more lamentable an Object is the *ignorant* and *illiterate Mechanick*; who, becauſe his Memory ſerves him to quote a great many Texts of Scripture, and that by Chapter and Verſe, (though the Senſe of the tenth part of them at leaſt he is far from underſtanding) and to repeat after a ſorry faſhion ſome Sermons he hath heard, thinks himſelf wiſer than thoſe very Teachers, to whom he owes all his little Scraps and Fragments of Knowledge, and ſufficiently qualify'd for a Critick, and Judge of Sermons and Orthodoxy; and conſe-

quently undertakes to be a Teacher himſelf, and perhaps ſets up for the Maſter of a new Sect, and prefers his own ſmall Wiſdom before the Wiſdom of the whole Church wherein he lives, and dares tax the moſt deliberate and adviſed Sanctions and Conſtitutions of the learned and holy Fathers of it, of Imprudence and Folly, yea and Impiety too! I am ſick of theſe Men, and therefore beſeeching God to give them a righter underſtanding of themſelves, I leave them, and proceed to my ſecond Obſervation.

Obſerv. 2. *Pride is ſo dangerous a Diſeaſe, and Vice of the Soul, that God thinks fit to prevent, or cure it in his Servants, by the ſharpeſt and ſevereſt Remedies.*

St. *Paul* ſhall have *a Thorn in his Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan to buffet* him, rather than be lifted up *above meaſure:* That he might not fall into the Devil's Sin, God permits him to fall under the Devil's Scourge, and he that could by his Apoſtolick Authority deliver up others, is *himſelf* in a manner deliver'd up to Satan,

Satan. It muſt be a deſperate Diſeaſe that requires ſo deſperate a Remedy.

The Man inclin'd to Pride muſt *perire, ne pereat, be undone, that he may not be undone*; that is, he muſt be undone by ſome grievous Affliction and Calamity in this World, that he may not be undone for ever in the other.

But let us learn Humility at a cheaper rate, endeavouring of *our ſelves* to be humble, before we are humbled by God, and not forcing our gracious Lord to uſe his ſharper Medicines for the Cure of our Pride. Let us watch every thought of Vanity that ariſeth in our Minds, and preſently ſuppreſs it, as a Spark of Fire, that may be kindled into a devouring Flame. Let us fix our Thoughts on the *worſt* of our ſelves, and the *beſt* of us ſhall find Matter enough *there* to keep us humble.

Obſerv. 3. *The Gift of Miracles, and particularly the Gift of curing Diſeaſes without natural Medicine, was ſo given by Chriſt to his Apoſtles, as not to be at their own abſolute diſpoſal, but to be diſpenc'd*

by them, as the Giver ſhould think fit.

This is no looſe, or far-fetch'd Collection from my Text, but ſuch as upon a little Conſideration offers itſelf to every Man. St. *Paul* was as great a Worker of Wonders as any of the chiefeſt Apoſtles: He could and did frequently cure all manner of the moſt incurable Diſeaſes, where he preach'd the Goſpel, yea and rais'd the Dead to Life; and yet he could not rid himſelf of that *Thorn in the Fleſh*, that painful Diſeaſe which Satan, by God's Permiſſion, had inflicted on him. What Account can be given of this, but that which we have already given in the Obſervation mention'd, *that the Gift of Miracles*, &c.? Upon the ſame Account it was, that the ſame St. *Paul* cured not his dearly beloved Son *Timothy* of his bad Stomach or Digeſtion, and the many ill Effects conſequent thereon, but wrote to him rather as a Phyſician than an Apoſtle, adviſing him in the Place above-mention'd, 1 *Tim.* v. 23. to *drink no longer Water, but to drink a little Wine for his Stomach-ſake,*

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and for his often Infirmities; that is, by this means to palliate and alleviate thoſe Infirmities which God thought fit to continue on him; though by his Apoſtles, and by himſelf, he totally remov'd other more incurable Diſeaſes and Diſtempers from thoſe to whom the Goſpel was preach'd, as occaſion requir'd. Hereby it appear'd, that the *Gift of curing Diſeaſes*, without the Help of Art or Nature, was indeed a Gift, and a Gift of God, and ſo given by him to his Apoſtles, that they could not exerciſe it arbitrarily, and at their own Pleaſure, but only to whom, when, where, and how God pleaſed, and ſhould direct them to make uſe of that Power: That ſo the Glory of all the wonderful Cures wrought by them, might at laſt redound to God the Author, and not to Man the Inſtrument.

And (by the way) perhaps this is the beſt Account that can be given of the Relique and Remainder of the primitive miraculous Gift of Healing, for ſome hundreds of Years paſt, viſible in this our Nation, and annex'd to the Succeſſion of

of our Chriſtian Kings: I mean the Cure of that otherwiſe generally incurable Diſeaſe, call'd *Morbus Regius* or the *King's Evil.* That divers Perſons deſperately labouring under it, have been cur'd by the meer *touch* of the *Royal Hand*, aſſiſted with the *Prayers* of the *Prieſts* of our Church attending, is unqueſtionable, unleſs the Faith of all our ancient Writers,[1] and the conſentient Report of hundreds of moſt credible Perſons in our own Age, atteſting the ſame, be to be queſtion'd. And yet, they ſay ſome of thoſe diſeaſed Perſons return from that Sovereign Remedy *re infecta*, without any Cure done upon them. How comes this to paſs? God hath not given this *Gift of Healing* ſo abſolutely to our *Royal Line*, but that he ſtill keeps the Reins of it in his own Hand, to let them looſe, or reſtrain them, as he pleaſeth. But I go forward.

Obſerv. 4. *God doth ſometimes lay* ve-

[1] See eſpecially *Bradwardine de cauſa Dei. l.* 1. *c.* 1. *coroll.* par. 32. p. 39.

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ry ſevere *bodily and outward Afflictions on the beſt of his Servants.*

St. *Paul* himſelf had his *Thorn in the Fleſh*, a painful Diſeaſe and Sickneſs ever and anon moleſting him. And is any of us better than that bleſſed Apoſtle? But I muſt not dwell on this.

Obſerv. 5. *Good Men, when they pray for the removal of outward Evils, are not always heard, God purpoſing to continue the Affliction on them for their ſpiritual Good.*

St. *Paul* pray'd earneſtly and frequently for the Removal of that *Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan* ſent him by God to prevent his being lifted up *above meaſure*, and yet was not heard. And yet he was heard too, God promiſing a ſufficient Grace to ſupport him under the Affliction which lay upon him. Which brings me to my laſt Obſervation.

Obſerv. 6. *When God ſees it for our Good, to continue any bodily or outward Affliction on us, we muſt ſubmit to his Will, and comfort our ſelves with the Aſſurance of his ſufficient Grace, and his Strength*

Strength to be made perfect in our Weakneſs.

This is the plain Senſe of the ninth Verſe, where the Oracle of God immediately deliver'd to St. *Paul*, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee, for my Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs*, is really ſpoken through St. *Paul*, to all that are in the ſame, or the like Circumſtances with him.

Perhaps 'tis the Caſe of ſome of us, that we labour under ſome painful or troubleſome Infirmity of Body, or elſe are preſſed with ſome other grievous outward Affliction, which we have uſed all Means within our Power to be rid of, and often with Earneſtneſs pray'd unto God to be deliver'd from, and yet ſtill remain under the ſame Calamity. If this be our Caſe, let us not be diſmay'd or caſt down, but remember, that the great Apoſtle's Condition was much the ſame with ours. And provided we be true and faithful Servants of God, as St. *Paul* was, (though not in ſo eminent a Degree as he) let us, I ſay, be aſſur'd, that the

the Words of God in my Text, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee, for my Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs*, are as certainly ſpoken to every one of us, as ever they were to him. And indeed there is a general Promiſe of God, of the ſame import, deliver'd by the ſame Apoſtle to all true Chriſtians, 1 *Cor.* x. *ver.* 13. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will, with the Temptation, alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* Wherefore let us comfort one another with theſe Words.

And let us conſider farther, that our Life here is but ſhort, and conſequently that no Trouble attending it can be long. We may ſay of every Affliction, [m] *it is but a little Cloud that will ſoon paſs away, vaniſh, and be gone.* Truſt in God, faithfully ſerve him, and be patient; *yet a little while, and he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry*, *Heb.* x. *ver.* 37. The Lord our Redeemer is at Hand, and his Harbinger, Death, by haſty Paces mar-

[m] *Nubecula eſt citò tranſitura.*

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cheth towards us; a Meſſenger that ought in reaſon to be moſt welcome to all afflicted Perſons, who by Faith and a good Life, or at leaſt by a timely and true Repentance for a bad one, are prepar'd to meet and receive him. This Phyſician will infallibly cure all our Maladies and Diſtempers, and put a final Period to all our Troubles and Afflictions. This will paſs us into a State of perfect *Reſt* and *Peace*, in which there ſhall be no more *Sickneſs* or *Sorrow*, becauſe no more *Sin*. Yea, this will lead us into that Preſence, and to that Right Hand of God, where there *is fulneſs of Joy*, and where *there are Pleaſures for evermore*, Pſal. xvi. *ver.* 11.

For which bleſſed Eſtate, God of his infinite Mercy fit us, and thereinto in his due time admit us all, through Jeſus Chriſt our only Lord and Saviour.

To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt be aſcribed all Honour and Glory, Adoration and Worſhip, now and for evermore, Amen.

SER-

SERMON VI.

A Viſitation Sermon concerning the great Difficulty and Danger of the Prieſtly Office.

St. JAMES *Chap.* iii. *Ver.* 1.

My Brethren, be not many Maſters, knowing that we ſhall receive the greater Condemnation.

THE *Text* may at firſt ſight appear to ſome, to ſtand at a very wide Diſtance from the preſent *Occaſion.* But I hope, by that time I have ſpent a little Pains in explaining it, I ſhall ſet the

Text and Occasion at a perfect Agreement.

The Words therefore are by Interpreters diversly expounded. Among the rest two Interpretations there are, which stand as the faireſt Candidates for our Reception.

1. Some understand the *Masters* here in my Text, *to be proud, malicious Censors, and Judges of other Mens Actions*, and so expound the Text as a Prohibition of rash and uncharitable Judgment, and make it Parallel to that of our Saviour, *Matth.* vii. *ver.* 1. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* Be not rash and hasty in censuring or judging the Actions of others, or speaking evil of them, considering that by so doing, you will but procure a greater Judgment of God upon your selves. The chief, if not the only Argument for this Interpretation, is the *Context* of the Apostle's Discourse, which in the following Verses is wholly spent against the Vices of the Tongue. But,

2. Others

2. Others there are who interpret the *Maſters* in the Text, to be *Paſtors* or *Teachers* in the Church of God; and accordingly underſtand the Words, as a ſerious Caution againſt the raſh Undertaking of the *Paſtoral Office* or Function, as an Office attended with great Difficulty and Danger, a Task very hard to be diſcharg'd, and wherein whoever miſcarries, makes himſelf thereby liable to a ſeverer Judgment of Almighty God.

This latter Interpretation (with Submiſſion I ſpeak it) ſeems to me, almoſt beyond doubt, the genuine Senſe of the Apoſtle. The Reaſons are evident in the Text itſelf. For, 1. Unleſs we thus expound the Words, it will be hard to give a rational account of this Word πολλοὶ *many*, why it ſhould be inſerted. For if we underſtand thoſe *Maſters* the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, to be raſh Judges and Cenſurers of others, 'tis moſt certain then, one ſuch would be too many, and the Multiplicity of them would not be the only culpable thing. But on the other ſide, if we receive the latter Interpreta-

tion, the account of the Word πολλοὶ is eaſily render'd, according to the Paraphraſe of *Eraſmus* thus, [n] *let not Paſtors or Teachers be too vulgar and cheap among you; let not every man ruſh into ſo ſacred an Office and Function.* And *Druſius*'s Gloſs on this very Word is remarkable: *Summa ſummarum; quo pauciores ſunt Magiſtri, eò melius agitur cum populo. Nam ut medicorum olim Cariam, ita Doctorum & Magiſtrorum nunc multitudo perdit Rempublicam. Utinam vanus ſim.* I need not *Engliſh* the Words to thoſe whom they concern.

2. If we embrace any other Interpretation, we muſt of Neceſſity depart from the manifeſt Propriety of the *Greek* Word which our Tranſlators render *Maſters.* The Word is διδάσκαλοι, which whoſo underſtands the firſt Elements of the *Greek* Tongue, knows to be derived from διδάσκω *to teach*, and ſo literally to ſignify Teachers. *Be not many Teachers.*

And ſo accordingly the *Syriack* renders it by a Word which the learned

[n] *Ne paſſim ambiatis eſſe Magiſtri.*

Dru-

Druſius tells us is parallel to the *Hebrew*, מורים, which undoubtedly ſignifies *Doctors* or *Teachers*.

Theſe Reaſons are ſufficient to juſtify our Interpretation, though I might add the Authority of the *Ancients*, who generally follow this Senſe, as alſo the concurrent Judgment of our moſt learned modern Annotators, *Eraſmus*, *Vatablus*, *Caſtellio*, *Eſtius*, *Druſius*, *Grotius*, with many others.

As for the Connexion of the Words thus explain'd, with the following Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle, I ſuppoſe this very eaſy account may be given of it. The Moderation and Government of the Tongue (on which St. *James*, in the ſequel of the Chapter, wholly inſiſts) though it be a general Duty, (for there is no Man's Tongue ſo lawleſs as to be exempted from the Dominion of right Reaſon and Religion) yet it is a Duty wherein the *Paſtor* or *Teacher* hath a peculiar Concern. The *Miniſter*'s Tongue is a chief Tool and Inſtrument of his Profeſſion, that which *ex Officio* he muſt often

often make use of: He lies under a Necessity of speaking much and often, and the wise Man tells us, *In the multitude of Words there wanteth not Sin*, Prov. x. *ver.* 19. And certainly, there is scarce any Consideration more powerful, to deter a Man from undertaking the Office of a Teacher, than this; how extremely difficult and almost impossible it is, for a Man that speaks much and often, so to govern his Tongue, as to speak nothing that either is itself unfit, or in an unfit time, or after an undue manner; and yet how highly every Teacher is concern'd so to do.

So that 'tis a very easy knot, to fasten my Text to the next Verse, thus: Let not every Man ambitiously affect the Office of a Teacher in the Church of God, considering that 'tis an Office of great Difficulty and Danger, *For in many things we offend all, if any Man offend not in Word, the same is a perfect Man*, &c. As if he had said, As there are many ways, whereby the best of us do offend, so there is no way whereby we so easily fall into Sin,

as by that ſlippery Member the Tongue, and there is no Man more expoſed to this Danger of tranſgreſſing with the Tongue, than the Teacher, who makes ſo much and ſo frequent uſe of it. So that the Teacher is τέλειος ἀνὴρ *a rare and perfectly accompliſh'd Man indeed*, that hath acquired the perfect Government of his Tongue. He that can do that, who fails not in that piece of his Duty, may eaſily alſo bridle his whole Body, *i. e.* rightly manage himſelf in all the other parts of his Paſtoral Office. But this, as it is very neceſſary, ſo it is extremely difficult, and therefore [p] *be not many Teachers.*

To this it will not be amiſs to add, what *Grotius* wiſely obſerves, that the Admonition of the Apoſtle concerning the Vices of the Tongue, ſubjoin'd to the Caution in my Text, [q] *is chiefly directed againſt brawling and contentious Diſputers*; ſuch Teachers as abuſe their Liberty of ſpeaking unto looſe Diſcourſes, and take occaſion from thence to

[p] Μὴ πολλοὶ διδάσκαλοι γίνεσθε.
[q] *Maximè directa eſt in rixoſos diſputatores.*

vent their own Spleen and Paſſions. Men of intemperate Spirits, and virulent Tongues, Troublers rather than Teachers of the People, whoſe Tongues are indeed Cloven Tongues of Fire, but not ſuch as the Apoſtles were endow'd with from above, as ſerving to burn, rather than to enlighten, to kindle the Flames of Faction, Strife and Contention, rather than thoſe of Piety and Charity in the Church of God.

And indeed, the direful and tragical Effects, which the Apoſtle in this Chapter aſcribes to the evil Tongue, as that *it is a Fire, a World of Iniquity, defiling the whole Body,* [r] *ſetting on Fire the Courſe of Nature, full of deadly Poiſon,* &c. are ſuch as are not ſo eaſily producible by the Tongue of a private Man, as of a Teacher. [s] *Whoſe Diſcourſe* (ſaith *Eraſmus*) *ſpreads its Poiſon by ſo much the more generally and effectually, as the Authority of the Speaker is greater, and his*

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[r] Φλογίζουσα τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως.

[s] *Cujus Sermo hoc latiùs ac periculoſiùs ſpargit ſuum venenum, quod auctoritate dicentis commendetur.*

Advantage alſo of ſpeaking to many.

Having removed this ſeeming Rub in the Context, I return again to the Text itſelf; wherein you may pleaſe to obſerve, 1. *A ſerious Diſſuaſive from the raſh undertaking of the Paſtoral Office: My Brethren, be not many Maſters*, or Teachers. 2. *A ſolid Argument or Reaſon to enforce it, drawn from the Difficulty and the Danger thereof; knowing that we ſhall receive*, &c. μεῖζον κρῖμα *a greater* or ſeverer *Judgment*, *i. e.* God will require more of us that are Teachers, than of others, we ſhall not eſcape or be acquitted in the Divine Judgment at ſo eaſy a Rate as they. There is a Place in the excellent Book of *Wiſdom* that is exactly parallel to my Text, and gives great Light to it, *Chap.* vi. *ver.* 5. [t] *A ſharp Judgment ſhall be to them that are in high Places.* Where the οἱ ὑπερέχοντες, thoſe that are *in high Places* in the *State*, anſwer to the διδάσκαλοι in my Text; the *Teachers* in the *Church*: The κρίσις ἀπότο-

[t] Κρίσις ἀπότομος ἐν τοῖς ὑπερέχουσι γίνεται.

μᾶλλον *the sharp, or the precise and severe Judgment*, to the μεῖζον κρῖμα, *the greater Judgment* in the Text.

I shall not at all insist on the first Branch of the Division, the Dissuasive, as remembring that I am to preach, not an *Ordination*, but a *Visitation Sermon*; and to discourse not to *Candidates* of *Holy Orders*, but to such as are already engaged in that sacred Profession. I come therefore to the *Reason or Argument in the Text*, (as of very much Concernment to all that are in the Priestly Office) *drawn from the Difficulty and Danger thereof*. To represent both which, as fully as my short Allowance of Time, and much shorter scantling of Abilities will permit, shall be my present Business.

And *first*, as to the *Difficulty of the Teacher's Office*, it is a very great Difficulty fully to explain it. So many are the Branches of his Duty, that it were a tedious Labour to reckon them up; Lord! what a Task is it then to discharge them! I shall content my self therefore *rudi Minervâ* briefly and only in general to

to deſcribe the chiefeſt requiſites that are neceſſary to conſtitute a complete Teacher in the Church of God, and even by that little which I ſhall ſay, I doubt not but it will appear, how very formidable, how tremendous an Undertaking that Function deſerves to be accounted. The *Teacher's Office* then requires *a very large Knowledge, a great Prudence, an exemplary Holineſs.* And ſurely much is required of him, of whom theſe things are required.

1. Then, *the Firſt requiſite to the Office of a Teacher, is a very large Knowledge.* The very Name of his Office implies this, he is διδάσκαλος *a Teacher*, and he that is ſuch, muſt be, as the Apoſtle requires, 1 *Tim.* iii. *ver.* 2. [v] *apt, or fit to teach.* And this he cannot be, unleſs he be [u] *well learned* and inſtructed himſelf, and furniſhed with a plentiful Meaſure of Divine Knowledge. God himſelf, by the Prophet *Malachi*, *Chap.* ii. *ver.* 7. requires that

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[v] Διδακτικὸς aptus, ſive idoneus ad docendum.
[u] Διδακτὸς doctus.

the

the *Prieſt's Lips* דַּעַת יִשְׁמְרוּ *ſhould keep or preſerve Knowledge.* Methinks the Expreſſion is more emphatical than is ordinarily conceived. It ſeems to imply that the Prieſt ſhould be a kind of Repoſitory or Treaſury of Knowledge, richly furniſhed with Knowledge himſelf, and able alſo abundantly to furniſh and ſupply the Wants of thoſe, that ſhall at any time have Recourſe to him for Inſtruction. And therefore it preſently follows: *And they* (that is, the People) *ſhall ſeek the Law at his Mouth.* Yea, the Words import that the Prieſt ſhould be a Treaſury of Knowledge not to be exhauſted.

He muſt have Knowledge not only to ſpend, but to keep; not like thoſe that live *from Hand to Mouth*, or whoſe Stock of Knowledge is quickly ſpent in a few Sermons, but he muſt have ſomething ſtill reſerved and laid up in Store. Methinks our Saviour doth excellently expound this Text, though it be by a Parable, *Matth.* xiii. *ver.* 52. *Every Scribe that is inſtructed in the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a Man that is an Houſholder,*

ſholder, which bringeth forth out of his Treaſure, things new and old. Where the γραμματεὺς or *Scribe* is the ſame among the Jews, with the νομοδιδάσκαλος *the Teacher or Expounder of the Law.* And 'tis the uſual Cuſtom of our Saviour, as *Grotius* obſerves, [w] "*By Names in uſe a-*"*mong the Jews, to expreſs ſuch Offices,* "*as were to be in the Chriſtian Church.* The γραμματεὺς then, or *Scribe*, is the ſame with the διδάσκαλος or *Teacher*, afterwards in the Church of Chriſt. This *Scribe* is ſaid by our Saviour to be [x] *inſtructed unto* or for *the Kingdom of Heaven, i. e.* well prepared, provided, furniſhed for the preaching of the Goſpel. And to ſhew that he is ſo, he is compared to the *Houſholder*, who for the maintaining of his Family, and the Entertainment of his Gueſts all the Year long, is ſuppoſed to have an ἀποθήκη or Repoſitory for Proviſions, (call'd here his θησαυρὸς *his Treaſure*) and there to

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[w] *Nominibus apud Judæos receptis ſignificare munia, quæ futura erant in Eccleſia Chriſtianâ.*

[x] Μαθητευθεὶς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.

have

have laid in Provisions καινὰ καὶ παλαιὰ *both new and old*, *i. e.* A great Store and Abundance, Provisions of all sorts and kinds. As the Spouse in the *Canticles* tells her Beloved, *Chap.* vii. *ver.* 17. *At our Gates are all manner of Fruits, both new and old, which I have laid up for thee.* This kind of Hospitality (however by the Iniquity of an ungrateful sacrilegious Age he may be disabled from exercising the other) is the indispensable Duty of the Pastor or Teacher. He must keep a Table well furnish'd with these heavenly Provisions for all Comers.

The *Knowledge* of a *Teacher*, we shall easily grant, extends itself into a very large Compass, if we consider what that Science is that he is to teach; Theology, [y] *the Art of Arts, and the Science of Sciences*, as *Nazianzen* speaks; the Queen and Mistress of all other Disciplines, to which they do all but *ancillare*, perform the Office of Handmaids,

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[y] Τέχνη τεχνῶν καὶ ἐπιστήμη ἐπιστημῶν.

and

and yet in ſo doing they are of uſe and Service to her.

And upon that account, the *Divine*, if he will be complete, muſt be πανεπιστήμων, muſt have compaſſed the ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία in the modern and more noble Signification of the Word; *i. e.* the whole Circle of Arts and Sciences. And he that hath ſo done, *illi des nominis hujus honorem*, let him paſs for a perfect *Divine*, he only is adequate to ſo ample a Title. But (God be thanked) this is only the heroick Perfection, not the neceſſary Qualification of a Teacher. A Man may very well content himſelf to ſit in a much lower Form, and yet ſit ſafely; he may move in a far inferior Orb, and yet give much Light, and communicate a benign and uſeful Influence to the Church of God. Let us view therefore the neceſſary parts of *Theology* itſelf, wherein the Teacher cannot be ignorant or uninſtructed, but to the very great Detriment of his Diſciples, and his own greater Shame and Hazard. How ample a Field have we ſtill before us?

us? Here is *Theology* poſitive, polemical, moral, caſuiſtical, and *all* moſt neceſſary for the Teacher.

As for *poſitive Divinity*, or the Knowledge of thoſe neceſſary ſpeculative Truths, that are reveal'd in Scripture, a Man can no more be a *Divine* that is unacquainted with this, than he can be a *Grammarian* that underſtands not the very firſt *Elements* of *Grammar*. And yet of ſo abſtruſe, ſo ſublime a Nature are even theſe Truths, that for a Man rightly to apprehend them, and clearly to explain them, eſpecially to the Capacity of his duller Hearers, is no very eaſy matter.

Polemical or *controverſial Divinity* is *Theologia armata*, or that part of Divinity which inſtructs and furniſheth a Man with neceſſary Weapons to defend the Truth againſt its Enemies. Now the good Shepherd's Office is not only to feed his Sheep, but to ſecure them from the Wolves, or elſe his Care in feeding them ſerves only to make them the fatter and richer Prey. And therefore

St.

St. *Paul*, *Tit.* i. *ver.* 9. requires that the Teacher ſhould be able, [y] *both by ſound Doctrine to exhort his hearers*, [z] *as alſo to convince* or refute *the gainſayers* or oppoſers. *Hæc non ſunt τῦ τυχόντος* (as *Grotius* well gloſſeth on the Text) every Man cannot do this, and yet every Teacher muſt. The Times wherein we live do much heighten the neceſſity of this Study: For we may enforce this Duty on all Teachers, by the ſame melancholy Argument that St. *Paul* doth in the forementiond Text. The Teacher (ſaith he) muſt be able *to convince gainſayers*: Why ſo? He gives the reaſon, *ver.* 10, 11. *There are many unruly and vain Teachers and Deceivers*, &c. *whoſe Mouths muſt be ſtopt, who ſubvert whole Houſes, teaching things which they ought not.* Theſe *unruly* and *vain Teachers*, theſe *Deceivers* were never certainly in a greater number than now they are. Theſe Mens Mouths muſt be ſtopt, there is a neceſſity for it; for otherwiſe they will ſubvert whole

[y] Καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαινούσῃ.
[z] Καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν.

Houſes,

Houſes, yea and pervert whole Pariſhes. Not that we have any hopes in this Age to ſtop the Mouths of our Oppoſers, ſo as to make them ceaſe ſpeaking (for bawl they will to Eternity, they are as the Apoſtle ſomewhere ſpeaks [a] *unreaſonable Men*, that underſtand not, admit not of any Topicks, no Argumentation though never ſo convincing, will make them give back;) but ſo at leaſt, as that they ſhall be able to ſpeak little to the purpoſe, ſo as to ſatisfy ſober, humble, docible Perſons, who have not paſſionately eſpous'd an Error, or to ſpeak in the Apoſtle's phraſe, *That are not given up to ſtrong deluſions, to believe Lies, that they may be damn'd.* In a word, our Fate in theſe Days is much like that of the Rebuilders of *Jeruſalem* after the Captivity, that were neceſſitated *every one, with one of his Hands to work in the Building, with the other to hold a Weapon*, Nehem. iv. *ver.* 17. With one Hand we muſt

[a] Ἄνθρωποι ἄτοποι.

build

build up our People in the Doctrine of Piety, with the other we must resist Heretical Opposers, who otherwise will demolish as fast as we build.

And to quicken us to this part of our Study, methinks no Consideration can be more forcible than this; to observe, where Ministers are defective therein, with what Triumph and Ostentation Deceivers carry Souls captive, to the Disgrace not only of the *Persons*, but also of the *Function* of the *Teachers*, yea and of *Truth* itself, which is wounded thus through their Sides, and bleeds through their Weakness and Folly.

But let us leave this *thorny Field* of *controversial*, and step a little into the other more fruitful, of *moral* or *practical Divinity*. Of this one speaks most truly: [b] *The Knowledge of Controversies is made necessary by Hereticks, the Study of Piety by God himself. Theology* is doubtless a *practical Science*, nothing in it but what aims at this end. And therefore

[b] *Controversiarum scientiam necessariam fecerunt Hæretici, studium Pietatis Deus ipse mandavit.*

he that neglects this practical Part of it, underſtands not the very Deſign of his own Profeſſion. Without this a Man deſerves no more to be accounted a *Divine*, than he a *Phyſician* that underſtands little or nothing of *Therapeuticks*. 'Tis true, there are ſome (otherwiſe not unlearned Men) that deſpiſe this part of *Theology*, as a vulgar, trivial, eaſy, obvious thing. But ſure they very much diſparage their own Judgment, who let the World underſtand that they are of this Mind. And the Event commonly ſhews how much they are miſtaken. For bring theſe Doctors out of their *Academick Cells*, ſet them to preach in a *Country Congregation*, and they ſoon become the Objects of Laughter, or rather of Pity to the Wiſer. To obſerve how they greedily ſnatch at every Occaſion of engaging in a Controverſy, and that perhaps ſuch a one as was never before heard of by their Hearers, but a *Controverſy* they had read in ſome of their Books, though long ago dead and buried, thus manfully encountring Ghoſts

and Shadows. How learnedly they will diſcuſs the barren Subtleties of *Aquinas* or *Scotus*, which the poor Souls no more underſtand, than if they had read them a *Lecture* out of *Cornelius Agrippa*'s *Occult Philoſophy*. How, when they come to *Practicals*, they are *velut in alium mundum tranſlati*, *as if they were enter'd into a new unknown World*; ſo frigid, barren, and lifeleſs are their Diſcourſes on thoſe Subjects. And may the ſame *Shame*, or a *ſerious Repentance*, attend all the Contemners of this uſeful *Theology*.

Laſtly, There is *caſuiſtical Divinity*, which I diſtinguiſh from *moral* or *practical*, as a more noble Species thereof, and which therefore deſerves a diſtinct Conſideration. For though all caſuiſtical Divinity be practical, yet all practical Divinity is not caſuiſtical; for the Deſign of caſuiſtical Divinity is to reſolve only the dubious and difficult Caſes that refer to Practice. How difficult this Study is, every Man that is not a very Stran-

ger therein, will readily acknowledge. And the Neceſſity thereof is evident: For what more neceſſary for a Teacher, than to be able to reſolve his People what their Duty is in difficult Caſes? Teachers, no doubt, are purpoſely placed by God in theſe Croſs-ways, as *Mercurial Statues*, not dead, but living ſpeaking ones, directing the perplex'd Traveller towards the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, and ſaying (as 'tis in the Prophet) *this is the way, walk therein.* And the Lord by the Prophet *Malachi* tells us, that the Prieſt ſhould be ſuch a one, as that the *People may ſeek the Law at his Mouth.* The Law, *i. e.* the Senſe of the Law, or what that Duty is which the Law obligeth them to in doubtful Caſes. A very *Oracle* to be conſulted by them on all Occaſions. 'Tis true, the greateſt Oracle may be ſometimes ſilenc'd by a greater Difficulty: But an Oracle altogether dumb is certainly a very lamentable Contradiction.

I have all this while ſpoken nothing of the *holy Scriptures*, that deep and unſear-

ſearchable Mine, from whence the *Divine* is to fetch all his Treaſure. From hence he is to borrow the Principles of all *Theology*, poſitive, polemical, moral, caſuiſtical; and therefore 'tis evident, that unleſs he be well-ſtudied in theſe, he muſt needs be defective in all the reſt. He muſt needs be a weak *Divine* that is not [d] *mighty in the Scriptures*, as 'tis ſaid of *Apollos*, *Acts* xviii. *ver.* 24. And, Lord, how many things are neceſſary to give a Man a right underſtanding of theſe ſacred Writings! I confeſs we are fallen into a very confident Age, wherein to interpret Scripture is counted the moſt obvious and eaſy thing; and every Mechanick, that ſcarce underſtands common Senſe, will venture on the expounding of theſe myſterious Books. We have ſo childiſhly departed from the Error of the *Romiſh* Church, in aſſerting an inexplicable Obſcurity of the Scriptures, even in things neceſſary, that for fear of this *Carybdis* we are ſwallow'd up in as dan-

[d] Δυνατὸς ἐν γραφαῖς.

gerous a *Scylla*, to make the Scriptures even deſpicable and contemptible. For, [e] as *Nazianzen* truly ſaith, *that which is thus eaſily underſtood, is generally with as much eaſe ſlighted and contemned.* But we know who they are, *who* [f] *run from one bad extreme into another.* For 'tis certain, that rightly to underſtand the holy Scriptures is a very difficult thing, eſpecially for us, who live at ſo great a Diſtance from thoſe times wherein they were written, and thoſe Perſons and Churches to whom they were directed. 'Tis no ſlender Meaſure of the Knowledge of *Antiquity*, *Hiſtory*, *Philology*, that is requiſite to qualify a Man for ſuch an Undertaking. They know nothing of the holy Scriptures, that know not this. And therefore thoſe unlearned and ignorant Men, that venture on the *Expoſition* of *Scripture*, being perfect Strangers to theſe Parts of Learning, muſt of Neceſſity wreſt them to their

[e] Τὸ ῥᾳδίως λαμβανόμενον ἅπαν ἐσχάτως φρονεῖσθαι.

[f] *Dum vitant vitia in contraria currunt.*

own

own and their Hearers Deſtruction.

I cannot omit to take notice here of that common *Axiom*, [g] *A good Textuary is a good Divine*; and to obſerve that it is moſt true, if rightly underſtood. If by a *Textuary*, we mean him who hath not only a *Concordance* of *Scriptures* in his Memory, but alſo a *Commentary* on them in his Underſtanding; who thinks it not enough to be ready in alledging the bare Words of Scripture, with the mention of Chapter and Verſe where it is written, unleſs he know the Senſe and Meaning of what he recites. The former every illiterate Sectary is able to do, who can quote Scriptures by Dozens and Scores, the Tythe whereof he underſtands not, and are little to his Purpoſe: The latter is the proper Commendation of the *Divine*. Without this Grain of Salt, the *Aphoriſm* but now mention'd, moſt juſtly falls under the ſevere Cenſure of our

[g] *Bonus Textualis, bonus Theologus.*

learned *Prideaux*: [h] *A good Textuary is a good Divine, ſay many, who underſtand not, mind not, either the Text, or Divinity, or Goodneſs.*

We have ſeen the neceſſary parts of *Theology* rudely delineated, and yet even by this imperfect Draught we may take an Eſtimate, how large that Man's Knowledge ought to be, that is oblig'd to underſtand all theſe things.

I confeſs that here alſo (and I have as much reaſon to rejoice in it as moſt of my Brethren) a Latitude is to be allow'd, and it were a Cruelty worſe than that of *Procruſtes*, to ſtretch all Men to the ſame Giant-like Proportion of Knowledge that ſome attain to. But yet doubtleſs 'tis a wiſe and prudent Severity, as [i] *Nazianzen* ſpeaks, *to meaſure every Teacher, and ſtretch him out to St.* Paul's *Rules and Canons.* And they, as we have already heard, require that he

[h] *Bonus Textualis, bonus Theologus, clamant quamplurimi, qui nec de textu, nec de Theologiâ, nec de bonitate ſunt ſoliciti.*

[i] Παρεκτείνειν τοῖς Παύλε κανόσιν.

ſhould

ſhould be διδακτικὸς, *apt and fit to teach*, *i. e.* in ſome competent Meaſure able to inſtruct his Hearers in all theſe uſeful parts of *Theology*.

2. I have diſcourſed ſo largely of the *firſt requiſite of the Teacher's Office*, that if I gave over here, I had ſaid enough to convince any ſober Perſon of the Difficulty thereof. But yet this is not all. *A very great Prudence alſo is required in the Teacher*, or elſe his Knowledge will be uſeleſs and unſerviceable. Wiſdom is the Soul that animates and enlivens Knowledge, without which a large Knowledge is but like a huge Carkaſs, a lifeleſs unactive thing. And if any Man thinks that *Science* and *Prudence* are things inſeparable, ſad Experience refutes him. Every learned Man is not a wiſe Man, and there are ſome who have read very many Books but very few Men; who have dwelt ſo much in their Studies, that they underſtand little abroad in the World, no not in their own little World, I mean their *Charges* and *Pariſhes*. There are ſome that have a large

Meaſure

Meaſure of the Spirit of Knowledge, but want the Spirit of Government, which yet is moſt neceſſary for him who is to be a Guide of Souls. Every *Teacher* is concern'd to be wiſe, both for himſelf and thoſe committed to his Charge. For *himſelf*, to take heed of Men, that he be neither betray'd by falſe Brethren, nor become a Prey to the Malice of profeſſed Enemies; to decline both the Envy and Contempt of his Neighbours, to keep himſelf within the Bounds of his Calling, [k] *to mind his own Buſineſs*, &c. To this kind of Wiſdom belongs the Advice of our Saviour, when ſending forth his *Apoſtles*, as innocent Lambs amongſt the Wolves of that Age, he cautions them to *be wiſe as Serpents, and innocent as Doves*, Matth. x. *ver.* 16. *i. e.* To uſe all honeſt and ſinleſs Arts to ſecure themſelves. But this is not the Prudence which I principally intend; for if a Miniſter be defective in this, he is no Man's Foe but his own, he hurts

[k] Τὰ ἴδια πράττειν.

only

only himſelf, and that but in his temporal Concerns.

I add therefore, that he is to be wiſe for *thoſe committed to his Charge*, leſt by any Indiſcretion of his, he obſtructs that which ought to be his great Deſign and Buſineſs, the *eternal Salvation of their Souls*. And here how many things are there, which a *Teacher* is concern'd to underſtand? He muſt be wiſe ſo to frame his Diſcourſes, eſpecially in publick, that he ſpeak nothing that may either offend the Weak, or give Advantage to the Malitious; that his Sermons may not only be good in themſelves, but adapted and fitted to the Neceſſity of his Hearers; that he make choice of the moſt ſuitable and powerful Arguments to enforce on them thoſe Chriſtian Duties, whereto he exhorts them. He muſt be wiſe in the Government of his Carriage and Actions, diſtinguiſhing eſpecially between Lawfulneſs and Expediency, and ſhunning not only that which is directly ſinful, but whatſoever is ſcandalous and offenſive. He muſt be

wiſe

wiſe in his common Converſe with his People, that he be neither of too eaſy, or of too moroſe and difficult an Acceſs; but eſpecially he is to be careful of this in his freer Converſation; that he indulge not himſelf any Liberty more than ordinary, among thoſe who will make an ill Uſe of that wherein there was no Ill intended. He is to be wiſe in the Choice of his Friends, not to inſcribe any Man into that Catalogue, that may reflect any Diſparagement on his Perſon or Function. For *qui non contemnitur à ſe, contemnitur à ſocio.* He muſt be wiſe, eſpecially in the Government of his own Family: For as the Apoſtle excellently reaſons, *If a Man know not how to rule his own Houſe, how ſhall he take care of the Church of God?* 1 Tim. iii. 5. He muſt be wiſe to enquire into the State of his Flock, and to diſcern their particular Tempers and Conſtitutions; and even to ſearch into their Hearts and ſecret Inclinations. He muſt be wiſe to adminiſter private Counſels and Reproofs, duly obſerving the Circumſtances of Time, of Place,

of

of Perſon, of Diſpoſition. For as the wiſeſt of Men tells us, *A Word fitly ſpoken is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver*, Prov. xxv. 11. Theſe, and many other things, the *Teacher* is deeply concerned to be well verſed in; and what a Task is this?

If it be objected, *That Prudence is a thing without our Power, an arbitrary Gift of God, which he beſtows on whom he pleaſeth, as he doth Beauty, or Wealth, or a good natural Wit, and therefore cannot reaſonably be impoſed on a Man as his Duty.* I anſwer. If this Prudence were wholly out of our Election, yet this certainly was left to our free Choice, whether we would undertake that Office whereto ſo great Prudence is requiſite. We have oblig'd our ſelves to it, by engaging in that Function, that cannot be diſcharg'd without it. But indeed, this excellent Gift of God is in a great Degree put within our Power, in Conjunction with the Divine Aſſiſtance. We may and muſt endeavour for it, diligently ſtudy it, carefully obſerve Things and Perſons,

Perſons, faithfully record Experiments, conſult wiſer Friends. But above all things we muſt take St. *James*'s Advice, *If any Man want Wiſdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him*, *James* i. *ver.* 5. Eſpecially if he deſire it conſtantly, earneſtly, and above all things in the World; if with *Solomon* he deſpiſe Greatneſs and Wealth, and all other ſecular Advantages; and, before them all, deſire this one thing of God, *That he would give him Wiſdom and Knowledge to go in and out before the People committed to his Charge and Guidance*, 2 Chron. i. *ver.* 10.

3. I come now to the *laſt*, though not the *leaſt* of thoſe Requiſites that are neceſſary to the *Office of a Teacher*, viz. *An exemplary Holineſs*. For of this I may ſay, as the Apoſtle doth, ſpeaking of the three theological Graces, 1 *Cor.* xiii. *ver.* 13. *And now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity, theſe three, but the greateſt of theſe is Charity.* So here, there remaineth *Knowledge*, *Prudence*, *Holineſs*, all three

three neceſſary Requiſites to make up a complete *Teacher*, but the greateſt of theſe is *Holineſs*. And what he farther ſays of the ſame Grace of Charity, in the beginning of the ſame Chapter, may with a little Change be apply'd alſo to our preſent Purpoſe. If a Man had πᾶσαν γνῶσιν *all ſorts of Knowledge*, ſo as to be able to *underſtand all Myſteries*; if he were prudent, beyond the prodigious Meaſure of *Solomon*'s Wiſdom; if thoſe Endowments were crown'd in him, with an Eloquence more than human, ſo that he were able to diſcourſe like an Angel, yet without this Holineſs he were as nothing, or at beſt but as *the ſounding Braſs* or *tinkling Cymbal*. The Prieſt that is not *cloath'd with Righteouſneſs*, though otherwiſe richly adorn'd with all the Ornaments of human and divine Literature, and thoſe gilded over with the Rays of a ſeraphick Prudence and Sagacity, is yet but a naked, beggarly, deſpicable Creature, of no Authority, no Intereſt, no Uſe or Service in the Church of God. The unholy *Teacher*, let him preach never

ver ſo well, diſcourſeth to little purpoſe; there will be no Life in his Doctrine, becauſe his Life is ſo deſtitute of the Spirit of Holineſs; he will ſooner damn his own Soul than ſave any Man's elſe. His Diſcourſes, though arm'd with the moſt powerful Oratory, will ſerve to move no other Affection in his Hearers than that of Indignation, againſt his Hypocriſy and Impudence, to hear him excellently declaim againſt a Vice, of which himſelf is notoriouſly guilty; and they will ſay,

Loripedem rectus derideat, Æthiopem albus.

In a Word, as a wiſe Man well obſerves, *Every notorious Vice is infinitely againſt the Spirit of Government, and depreſſes a Man to an Evenneſs with common Perſons.*

——*Facinus quos inquinat æquat.*

And when a Man's Authority is thus loſt, he becomes a thing wholly uſeleſs in the Church of God. Uſeleſs, did I ſay?

ſay? 'twere well if that were all: He is the moſt pernicious Creature that moves on God's Earth; he ſerves to the worſt Purpoſes, to make Men Atheiſts, Infidels or Hereticks. Learned and knowing Men, of ill Lives, have been always the greateſt Stumbling-Block in the Church of God; their Fall is not ſingle, but attended with the Ruin of many others; who imitating the barbarous Civility of thoſe Nations that uſe to ſolemnize the Funerals of their great Men, by ſacrificing a great part of their Families, when their *Teachers* damn themſelves, are ready to die and periſh with them for Company. And the Fallacy that ruins them, is this; Becauſe ſome wiſe Men live wickedly, they preſently conclude that Wickedneſs is the greateſt Wiſdom: As if it were impoſſible for the Will to chuſe contrary to the Dictates of the Underſtanding, or for a Man that knows his Duty, not to do it. We of this Age have reaſon to take ſpecial notice of this. For as *Cicero*, enquiring into the Cauſes of thoſe bold

and unheard of Attempts that *Catiline* and his Confederates made upon the Commonwealth of *Rome*, presently gives this Account: *Nos (dico apertè) nos Consules desumus.* So when we are astonish'd at the prodigious Blasphemies, Heresies, and Schisms of our Times, and wonder at the Cause of them, we may quickly resolve our selves after the same manner: *Nos (dico apertè) nos Pastores desumus.* For certainly all the Arguments that Hereticks and Sectaries have made use of, to seduce our People from Obedience unto the most excellent Doctrine, Liturgy, and Discipline of our Church, would have been accounted ridiculous Sophisms, and no way served their wicked Purposes, if they had not been furnish'd with a more powerful Topick *ab exemplo* from the vitious Lives of some Clergymen. And as to this:

Pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, & non potuisse refelli.

I might here be very large in representing

ſenting the Neceſſity of Holineſs in a *Miniſter*, but I ſhall only obſerve, that the wicked *Teacher* ſins with the higheſt Aggravation of his Guilt, and the leaſt Hope of his Repentance; he is the greateſt and moſt deſperate Sinner.

The *greateſt Sinner*; for either he is a Perſon of more than ordinary Knowledge, or he is not: If not, he ſinn'd greatly in undertaking that Office, to which ſo great a Knowledge is requiſite: If he be, his Knowledge doubtleſs encreaſeth his Guilt. *For he that knows his Maſter's Will, and doth it not, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes.* Beſides, he muſt needs ſin with a very ſtrange Aſſurance, by living in that Wickedneſs which he daily reproves and preaches againſt, and ſo becoming αὐτοκατάκριτος *a condemn'd Man* from his own Mouth.

But that which I chiefly urge is this: The *wicked Teacher* is, of all Men living, in the moſt hopeleſs and deſperate Condition. 'Tis uſually obſerved of Seamen, that dwell in the great Deep, that if they are not very pious, for the moſt

part they are deſperately wicked; becauſe they daily behold the Wonders of the Lord, and beſides live in a continual and very near Danger, bordering upon the very Confines of Death, and being,

Quatuor aut ſeptem digitis, a Morte remoti.

but a few Fingers breadth divided from their fluid Graves. And if theſe Conſiderations do not perſuade them to *fear the Lord exceedingly*, as 'tis ſaid of the *Mariners* in *Jonah* i. *ver.* 16. it argues that they are exceedingly hardned. The Obſervation is truer of the *Miniſter*; if he be not a good Man, he muſt needs be extremely bad; for he daily converſeth in the great Deep of the holy Scriptures, and there ſees and reads ſuch things, that if they do not effectually perſuade him to Piety, 'tis certain he is a Man of an obdurate Heart.

What Remedy is likely to work this Man's Cure and Repentance? Will the dreadful Menaces and Threats of God's Word affright him? No; theſe are daily

thunder'd out of his own Mouth, and yet to him they are but *bruta fulmina*. Will the gracious Promiſes of God allure him? No; he daily charms his Hearers with theſe, but remains himſelf as the deaf Adder. Will thoſe excellent Books of learned and pious Men, that he reads in his Study, work any good on him? No; he that ſlights God's Word, will little regard the Words of Men. Will the Publick Prayers make him ſerious? No; he daily reads them, and his daily Practice is contrary to his daily Prayers. Will a Medicine compounded of the Fleſh and Blood of the Son of God (I mean the holy Euchariſt) do the miſerable Man any good? No; he hath frequently received thoſe dear Pledges of his Saviour's Love, and yet is ſtill as bad as ever, and ſo hath *trodden under Foot the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant*, wherewith he ſhould have been ſanctify'd. The Lord look upon this Man, for there is no hope of him without a Miracle of Divine Mercy. Nay indeed, all theſe excellent Means, by being made familiar to

him, have loſt their Efficacy upon him. Our Saviour, methinks, doth excellently repreſent the hopeleſs Condition of a vicious Miniſter, by a Parable, *Mat.* v. *ver.* 13. where ſpeaking to the *Apoſtles* (conſider'd, I ſuppoſe, as Miniſters of the Word) he tells them, *Ye are the Salt of the Earth, but if the Salt have loſt his ſavour, wherewithal ſhall it be ſalted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be caſt out and trodden under Foot of Men.* Salt, if it be good, is of excellent Uſe to ſeaſon many things, but if it become itſelf unſavoury, it is not only the moſt uſeleſs thing, *good for nothing but to be caſt out*, &c. but irrecoverably loſt; there is nothing will fetch putrid Salt again, *for if the Salt hath loſt its ſavour, wherewithal ſhall it be ſalted?* Thus neceſſary is *Holineſs* in a *Miniſter*, both for himſelf and others.

I have now done with the *Difficulty*, and conſequently with the *Danger of the Paſtoral Office*, repreſented from the three grand Requiſites thereunto; *A very large Knowledge, a great Prudence, an exemplary Holi-*

neſs,

neſs. I ſhall add but one Conſideration more, of itſelf abundantly ſufficient to evince the whole; *viz. That every Teacher is accountable for the Souls committed to his Charge.* This is the plain Doctrine of the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, *Chap.* xiii. *ver.* 17. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that muſt give Account*, &c. A dreadful Conſideration this! And St. *Chryſoſtom* tells us, that when he read that Text, *it did* ἐκπλῆξαι τὴν ψυχὴν *cauſe a kind of Earthquake within him, and produce a holy Fear and Trembling in his Soul.* And in his Commentary on the Text, he thus exclaims, [1] *Lord how, how difficult, how hazardous an Undertaking is this! What ſhall a Man ſay to thoſe wretched Men, that raſhly thruſt themſelves into ſuch an Abyſs of Judgments? All the Souls that are committed to thy Conduct, Men, Women, and Children, thou art to*

[1] Βαβαὶ πόσος ὁ κίνδυνος! τί ἂν τις εἴποι πρὸς τοὺς ἀθλίους τούτους ἐμπεπλεγμένους ἑαυτοὺς τοσαύτης τιμωρίας ἄξιοι; πάντων ἂν ἄρχεις γυναικῶν, καὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ παίδων σὺ λόγον δίδους.

give an Account of. He presently subjoyns, [m] *'Tis a Wonder if any Ruler in the Church be saved.* A passionate Hyperbole, expressing his deep Sense of the extreme *Danger of the Pastoral Office.*

'Tis true indeed, the excellent Bishop speaks there of those of his own most sacred Order, whose Place and Dignity in the *Church of God*, as it is eminently higher, their *Charge* greater, their *Inspection* more extensive, so will their *Account* be accordingly. But yet the same is true in its Proportion of every Clergyman, of what *Order* soever he be. So St. *Austin* expressly, [n] *If you mark it (most dear Brethren) you shall find that all the Lord's Priests, not only Bishops, but also Presbyters and Ministers of Churches, stand in a very hazardous Condition.* And he gives a shrewd reason for what he says, a little after, [o] *If at the Day of*

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[m] Θαυμαζω ει τινα δει της ιδιωτικης σωζεσθαι.

[n] *Si diligenter attenditis (Fratres charissimi) omnes sacerdotes Domini, non solum Episcopos, sed etiam Presbyteros & Ministros Ecclesiarum, in grandi periculo esse cognoscitis.*

[o] *Si enim pro se unusquisque vix poterit in die judicii rationem reddere, quid de sacerdotibus futurum est, à quibus sunt omnium animæ requirendæ?*

Judgment

Judgment it will be a hard Task for every Man to give an account of his own Soul, what will become of Priests, of whom God will require an Account of the Souls of so many others committed to their Charge? He concludes, *magnum opus, sed gravis sartina.* *The Care of Souls is indeed a great Work, a noble Undertaking, but yet a very grievous Burthen.* He must be a Man of very firm Shoulders that is not crush'd under it.

I have oftimes, not without Wonder and Indignation, observed the strange Confidence of *Empiricks* in *Physick*, that dare venture on the Practice of that noble Art, which they do not at all understand; considering how for a little paltry Gain they shrewdly hazard, or rather certainly destroy, the Health and Lives of Men; and have judg'd them worthy of as capital and ignominious a Punishment, as those that kill Men on the High-ways. But I have soon exchang'd this Meditation into another of more Concernment to my self; and my Indignation hath quickly return'd into

my

my own Bosom, when I consider how much bolder and more hazardous an Attempt it is for a Man to venture on the *Priestly Office*; to minister to the eternal Health and Salvation of Souls. How much Skill is requisite to qualify a Man for such an Undertaking? how great Care in the Discharge of it? what a sad thing it would be, if through my Unskilfulness, or Negligence, any one Soul should miscarry under my Hands, or die and perish eternally?

We minister to Souls. Souls! Methinks in that one Word there is a Sermon. Immortal Souls! Precious Souls! One whereof is more worth, than all the World besides, the *Price of the Blood of the Son of God*. I close up this with the excellent Words appointed by the Church to be read at the *Ordination* of every Priest: "Have always therefore "in your Remembrance, how great a "Treasure is committed to your Charge. "For they are the Sheep of Christ, "which he bought with his Death, and "for whom he shed his Blood. The

"Church

"Church and Congregation whom ye "ſerve, is his Spouſe and Body. And "if it ſhall happen the ſame Church, or "any Member thereof, to take any "Hurt or Hinderance by Reaſon of "your Negligence, you know the "Greatneſs of the Fault, and alſo the "horrible Puniſhment that will enſue.

And now methinks I may uſe the *Apoſtle*'s Words in another Caſe, 1 *Cor.* i. *ver.* 26. [p] *Ye ſee your Calling, Brethren.* You ſee how extremely difficult and hazardous an Office it is, we have undertaken; [q] *who is ſufficient for theſe things?* Whoſe Loins do not tremble at this fearful Burthen on his Shoulders? Who would not be almoſt tempted to repent himſelf of his Undertaking, and to wiſh himſelf any the meaneſt *Mechanick* rather than a *Miniſter?* But alas! this were vain, yea ſinful. We are engaged in this *ſacred Office*, and there is no retreating; we muſt now run the Hazard, how

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[p] Βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν ἀδελφοί.

[q] Καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός.

great

great ſoever it be; in we are, and on we muſt. What ſhall we then ſay? what ſhall we do? Surely this is our beſt, yea our only Courſe. Let us firſt proſtrate our ſelves at the Feet of the Almighty God, humbly confeſſing and heartily bewailing our great and manifold Miſcarriages in this weighty Undertaking; let us weep Tears of Blood (if it were poſſible) for the Blood of Souls, which we have reaſon to fear may ſtick upon our Garments. The Blood of Souls, I ſay: For when I conſider how many leſs diſcerned ways there be, whereby a Man may involve himſelf in that Guilt, as not only by an openly vicious Example, but even by a leſs ſevere, prudent, and wary Converſation; not only by Actions directly criminal, but by lawful Actions, when offenſive, (for by theſe the *Apoſtle* aſſures us, *a Man may deſtroy the Soul of his weak Brother, for whom Chriſt dyed*, Rom. xiv. *ver.* 15.) not only by a groſs Negligence and ſupine Careleſſneſs, but by every leſſer Remiſſion of thoſe Degrees of Zeal and Diligence, which

which are requiſite in ſo important an Affair. In a word, by not doing all that a Man can, and lies within his Power, to ſave the Souls committed to his Charge. I ſay, when I conſider this, for mine own part I cannot, I dare not juſtify my ſelf, or plead *Not guilty* before the great Judge of Heaven and Earth; but do upon the bended Knees of my Soul bewail my Sin, and implore his pardoning Grace and Mercy, crying mightily unto him; *Deliver me from this Blood-guiltineſs, O my God; thou God of my Salvation, and my Tongue ſhall ſing aloud of thy Righteouſneſs.*

Having laid our ſelves at God's Feet, let us not lie idly there, but ariſe, and for the future do the Work of God, with all Faithfulneſs and Induſtry; yea, let us make amends for our paſt Negligence, by doubling our future Diligence. And for our Encouragement here, let us remember, that though many things are required of a *Miniſter*, yet the chief and moſt indiſpenſible Requiſites are theſe *Two*, *A paſſionate Deſire to ſave Souls*, and *An unwearied*

ried Diligence in the Purſuit of that noble Deſign. The *Miniſter* that wants theſe two Qualifications will hardly paſs the Teſt, or gain the Approbation of God the great *Judge* and *Tryer*; but where *theſe* are found, they will cover a Multitude of other Failings and Defects. Let us therefore, Reverend Brethren, (and may I here conjure both you and my ſelf, by the endeared Love we bear to our own Souls, and the precious Souls committed to our Charge, yea by the Blood of the Son of God, the Price of both) let us, I beſeech you, from henceforth return to our ſeveral *Charges*, zealouſly and induſtriouſly plying the great Work and Buſineſs that is before us. Let us think no Pains too great, to eſcape that μεῖζον κρῖμα that *greater Judgment* that otherwiſe attends us. Let us ſtudy hard, and read much, and pray often, and *preach in Seaſon and out of Seaſon*, and catechize the Youth, and take wiſe Opportunities of inſtructing thoſe, who being of riper Years, may yet be as unripe in Knowledge; and viſit the Sick, and

according

according to our Abilities relieve the Poor; ſhewing to all our Flock, the Example of a watchful, holy, humble Converſation. And may a great Bleſſing of God crown our Labours! Let us go on, and the Lord proſper us.

I have done *ad Clerum*, and have but a word more *ad Populum*, *to the People*.

My Brethren, you may poſſibly think your ſelves altogether unconcern'd in this whole Diſcourſe. But if you do, you are miſtaken; all this nearly concerns even you. I ſhall only point to you wherein.

1. If the *Paſtoral Office* be ſo tremendous an Undertaking, judge then, I pray you, *of the ſacrilegious Boldneſs and Impiety* of thoſe *Uzzah*'s among the Laity, that dare touch this Ark, the *Prieſt's Charge* and *Care*. If we (my Brethren) that have been trained up in the Schools of the *Prophets*, that have been educated with no ſmall Care and Coſt to this Employment, that have ſpent a double Apprenticeſhip of Years in our Studies, and moſt of us a great deal more. If

we, I say, after all this, find reason to tremble at our Insufficiency for such an Undertaking, how horrible is the Confidence, or rather Impudence, of those Mechanicks that have leapt from the Shop-board or Plow into the Pulpit, and thus *per saltum* by a prodigious Leap commenced Teachers? What shall we say to these *Mountebanks* in the Church, these *Empiricks* in *Theology*? I only say this. I can never sufficiently admire either *their* Boldness in venturing to be Teachers, or the childish Folly and Simplicity of those that give themselves up to be their Disciples. 'Tis a Miracle that any such Person should dare to preach, or if he do, that any Man in his right Wits should vouchsafe to hear him.

2. This Discourse concerning the *Difficulty and Hazard of the Priestly Office shews sufficiently all the Peoples Danger.* 'Tis the Danger your own Souls are in (my Brethren) if not carefully lookt to, that is the great Hazard of our Office. O therefore, if you do consider it, what need have you to look to your selves.

3. *Lastly,*

3. *Laſtly*, If our *Work* and *Office* be attended with this Difficulty, ſure 'tis your Duty to pity us, to pray for us, to encourage us by all poſſible ways and means to the vigorous Performance of it; at leaſt not to add to our Load, or diſcourage us, either by your wayward Factiouſneſs, or ſtubborn Profaneneſs, or ſacrilegious Injuſtice: If you do, ſad will be your Account.

Remember therefore the Advice of the *Apoſtle*, *Heb.* xiii. *ver.* 17. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that muſt give an Account,* [b] *that they may do this* (*i. e.* attend on this work of watching over your Souls) *with Joy, and not with Grief.* *Grotius*'s Paraphraſe is here moſt genuine, [c] *ſweeten and allay the irkſome Labour of your Teachers, by performing to them all Offices of Reſpect and Love, that they may with Alacrity and not with Grief diſcharge that*

[b] Ἵνα μὴ χαρᾷ τοῦτο ποιῶσι, καὶ μὴ στενάζοντες.

[c] *Mulcete eum laborem omnibus obſequiis & officiis, ut cum alacritate potius quam dolore fungantur, munere ſatis gravi, etiamſi à vobis nihil triſte accedat.*

Function which is of itſelf a ſufficient Burthen, without any Addition of Sorrow from you.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt be aſcribed all Honour and Glory, Adoration and Worſhip, both now and for ever, Amen.

SER-

SERMON VII.

The different Degrees of Bliſs and Glory in Chriſt's heavenly Kingdom, anſwer to the different Degrees of Grace here below. Several Objections againſt this Doctrine are anſwer'd.

2 PETER *Chap.* i. *Ver.* 11.

For ſo an Entrance ſhall be miniſter'd unto you abundantly, *into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

IT is the great Concern of every Man, in the firſt Place, to get the *ſaving*

Grace of God, and having gotten it, to proceed and encreaſe in it; earneſtly to reach after a Principle of the *Divine Life* within himſelf, and having attain'd it, to cheriſh and improve it; to endeavour of evil (as we are all naturally and antecedently to the Divine Grace) to become truly good, and then every Day to grow better; firſt to be ſincere Diſciples of the *Holy Jeſus*, and then to aſpire, ſtudy and labour hard, to become great Proficients in his Divine School. This latter Duty, St. *Peter* earneſtly and vehemently preſſeth on the converted Jews of the Diſperſion, to whom he writes, and in them upon *all* of us, in the Verſes preceding my *Text*; where he exhorts them in the moſt emphatical Expreſſions to an holy Covetouſneſs after ſpiritual Riches, and to accumulate and heap up heavenly Treaſures with as much Greedineſs, as the Men of this World do their Gold and Silver: To add one Grace to another, and one Degree of each Grace upon another, and to abound in Vertue and good Works. For after he had

ver. 4. minded them of the great Deſign of Chriſtianity, which is to make Men *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, by reſcuing them from *the Corruption that is in the World through Luſt*, *i. e.* To convert Men from their evil and wicked Courſes, and to bring them to a State of Grace and Regeneration. And charitably ſuppoſing this to be already done in them, he proceeds to ſhew them their farther Duty, *ver.* 5, 6, 7, 8. *And beſides this, giving all Diligence, add to your Faith Vertue; and to Vertue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance, and to Temperance Patience, and to Patience Godlineſs, and to Godlineſs brotherly Kindneſs, and to brotherly Kindneſs Charity. For if all theſe things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye ſhall neither be barren nor unfruitful, in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* As if he had ſaid: You have now, God be thanked, eſcaped the Pollutions of the World, and are truly, I hope, converted to Chriſtianity, and in Baptiſm have been regenerated by the Holy Ghoſt;

(that he means by their being *made Partakers of the Divine Nature.*) This indeed is a very great Atchievement, and an invaluable Mercy of God, vouchsaf'd to you; yet I beseech you, rest not here; but *besides this, giving all Diligence, add to your Faith Vertue*, &c. So that the Sum of his Discourse is to press them first to Truth in Grace, and then to Growth in Grace; to acquire the Divine Vertues reckon'd up by him, and then to abound in them. And to perswade them to this *abounding in Grace and Vertue*, he useth a very powerful Motive and Argument in the Words of my *Text: For so an entrance shall be minister'd unto you* abundantly, *into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* As if he had said, If you thus abound in Grace, you shall abound in Glory; you shall not only come to Heaven, or get just within the Gate of that glorious Region, (and yet happy is he that can arrive to be but *a Door-keeper in the House of his* heavenly Father) but you shall have an *abundant entrance* into it;

you

you ſhall go very far, and attain an higher Pitch and Degree of Glory there. This is the plain and obvious Senſe of the Words.

Not to ſpend time needleſsly, or to trouble you with any farther *Preface*, the *Text* thus briefly explain'd and conſider'd, with Relation to the *Context*, readily and of itſelf offers to us this Propoſition:

There ſhall be Degrees of Bliſs and Glory in Chriſt's heavenly Kingdom; and the more we abound in Grace and good Works here, the more abundant ſhall our Reward be hereafter.

This *Propoſition* I intend, with the Divine Aſſiſtance, for the Theme and Subject of my following *Diſcourſe*.

That this is no nice or fruitleſs Speculation, fitted only to exerciſe the Wits of Men, or to entertain their Curioſity, but a Branch [a] *of that Truth which is according to Godlineſs*, as the *Apoſtle Paul* expreſſeth it, *Tit.* i. *ver.* 1. That is, a Doctrine tending to the Advancement

[a] Ἀληθείας ἡ κατ' εὐσέβειαν.

and Furtherance of Piety and Vertue amongſt Men, will be ſoon evident to any Man, that with any Degree of ſerious Attention ſhall conſider it.

If this be a Truth, it muſt needs be a uſeful one, and of Concernment to us. And that it is ſo, will farther appear to all, from thoſe other *Texts of Scripture*, wherein it is not only plainly taught, but alſo urg'd as a Motive to a more fruitful Piety, which ſhall be produc'd in the ſequel of my *Diſcourſe*; wherein I ſhall preſcribe to my ſelf this plain and eaſy Method.

Firſt, I ſhall farther prove the *Propoſition* by other clear and expreſs *Texts of Scripture*, and by Reaſons and Arguments grounded on *Scripture*, and by the Conſent of the *Catholick Church*, interpreting the *Scripture* to the ſame Senſe. In the next Place, I ſhall endeavour to anſwer the Principal Objections that are uſually made againſt this Truth. *Laſtly*, I ſhall conclude with a brief Application of the whole *Diſcourſe*.

Firſt, For the fuller Demonſtration of

the Point, *let us in the firſt Place hear what the Holy Ghoſt hath in other Places of Scripture deliver'd concerning it.* And here, out of a great Abundance of Texts, that might be alledg'd, I ſhall make choice only of ſuch, as ſpeak more plainly and evidently to our Purpoſe.

Such is that Text in the nineteenth Chapter of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel; where, to St. *Peter* asking what Reward he and the reſt of the *Apoſtles* ſhould have, that had forſaken their *All* in this World to follow Chriſt, and be his Diſciples, *ver.* 27. our Saviour thus anſwers, *ver.* 28. *Verily I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the Regeneration when the Son of Man ſhall ſit in the Throne of his Glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit upon Twelve Thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Iſrael.* So I read the Text. For it is evident enough, our Tranſlators have miſpointed it, referring the Words *in the Regeneration*, to that which went before, thus: *Ye which have followed me in the Regeneration*; whereas they ſhould be joyn'd to the following Words, thus: *Ye which*

have

have followed me, ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ *in the Regeneration when the Son of Man ſhall ſit in the Throne of his Glory,* &c. *In the Regeneration*; what is that? Not in Baptiſm, nor in the Regeneration or renewing of the Spirit, as ſome have fancied; for neither of theſe Significations will make good Senſe in this Place; but in the Reſurrection, which will be indeed a παλιγγενεσία *a Regeneration*, or ſecond Generation of Men to Life, after that Life which they had in their firſt Generation was extinguiſh'd. Which ſecond Generation, or Production of Men to Life, is more properly *the Work of God*, as being effected ſolely by his Divine Power, without the Concurrence of any ſecond Cauſes; whereas in our firſt Generation into the World our Parents were inſtruments. Hence thoſe words of the *Pſalmiſt* concerning Chriſt, *Pſal.* ii. *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*, are ſaid by St. *Paul* to be then fulfill'd in him, when God raiſed him from the Dead, *Acts* xiii. *ver.* 32, 33. *The Promiſe which was made unto the Fathers,*

God

God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us their Children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again, as it is alſo written in the ſecond Pſalm, *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee.* And hence alſo, all the godly are ſaid at the Reſurrection to become the *Children of God, eo nomine*, upon the very Account of their being then raiſed by God to a bleſſed immortal Life, *Luke* xx. *ver.* 36. *They are called the Children of God, being the Children of the Reſurrection.*

Well then! In or at the Regeneration, or Reſurrection, when Chriſt ſhall ſit in the Throne of his Glory, as the Judge of Men and Angels, it is promiſed to the Twelve *Apoſtles*, that they *alſo ſhould ſit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Iſrael.* Concerning the full Senſe of which words, though there is ſome Diſpute, yet this is generally agreed among Interpreters, and it is moſt evident from the *Context*, that they expreſs ſome ſingular and eminent Glory, which the *Apoſtles* ſhould receive in the World to come, as the

Reward

Reward of their ſingular and eminent Self-denyal, in devoting themſelves to Chriſt's Goſpel. And though every *Saint* ſhall in his Degree be inthron'd in the heavenly Glory; yet here are twelve Thrones of Judicature and Preeminence, anſwering to the Twelve Apoſtles then in Being. Indeed *Judas*, one of the Twelve, afterward fell from his Office, and ſo loſt his Throne too. But this was through his own Default, and our bleſſed Lord failed not in his Promiſe. But the curſed Traitor, by his horrid Violation of the Condition of it, forfeited his Right therein. There being Twelve Apoſtles at that time, to whom our Saviour ſpake theſe words, he ſaith *they ſhould ſit upon Twelve Thrones*; as if *Judas* alſo ſhould have his Throne to ſit on; not that he thought the Wretch ſhould ever attain that Throne, (for he knew him from the beginning to be a Devil) but becauſe, if *Judas* had continued in the faithful Diſcharge of his Office, as the other Apoſtles did, he ſhould have had his Throne, as the other Apoſtles had

had theirs, as St. *Chryſoſtom* well obſerves; for Chriſt ſpeaks of his *Apoſtles*, *ſecundum præſentem juſtitiam*, *according to their preſent Righteouſneſs*, and not ſo much of their Perſons, as of their State and Office.

As if he ſhould have ſaid, The *Office of Apoſtles*, as it is an Office of the higheſt Service, Labour, and Difficulty, ſo it hath the higheſt Reward propounded to it; inſomuch that they who well perform it, ſhall be advanced to the moſt eminent Thrones of Glory in the Life to come, and be neareſt to my ſelf the *King of Glory*. For, to *ſit upon Thrones*, *judging* (or governing, or being over) *the twelve Tribes of Iſrael*, is a metaphorical Expreſſion, taken (as *Grotius* well obſerves upon the Place) from the ancient State of the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, in which οἱ φυλάρχαι *the Princes*, or *Heads of the Tribes*, came neareſt in Dignity to the King's Majeſty, and in the *Publick Aſſemblies* ſat next to the Royal Throne in Chairs of State made of Ivory. So that it is manifeſt, Chriſt here promiſeth his *Apoſtles* an eminent Degree

of

of Glory and Dignity in his heavenly Kingdom. And hence the Language is different, which our Saviour uſeth, concerning the Reward of thoſe who ſhould afterwards imitate the *Apoſtles*, and follow them in their active and paſſive Vertue, though *haud æquis paſſibus*, *at a very humble diſtance.* For of thoſe in the next Verſe he ſaith, that *they ſhould receive an hundred fold*, (a very ample and liberal Reward of their Self-denyal, in whatſoever Inſtance expreſſed) *and inherit everlaſting Life*; but he doth not ſay, as of the Apoſtles, that they ſhall *ſit upon Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Iſrael.*

The next Place we ſhall cite, will give Light to the former, and ſpeaks more clearly to our preſent purpoſe. It is to be found in the very next *Chapter*, the twentieth *Chapter* of the ſame *Goſpel* of St. *Matthew*, where we read *ver.* 20, 21, that the Mother of the Sons of *Zebedee*, *James* and *John*, came with her two Sons to Chriſt with this Petition, *Grant that theſe my two Sons may ſit, the one on thy Right*

Right Hand, and the other on the Left, in thy Kingdom. She had heard from her Sons, that the *Apoſtles* in general had a Promiſe of a more eminent Dignity in Chriſt's Kingdom, like that of the *Princes* or *Heads of the Tribes* in the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, as hath been already noted. But ſhe knew, that even among the *Apoſtles* themſelves there would be Degrees of Dignity; as in the ancient Kingdom of *Iſrael*, the two firſt Places belong'd to the Princes of the Tribes of *Judah* and *Joſeph*; theſe two firſt Places therefore ſhe asks for her two Sons in the Kingdom of Chriſt. To ſit at the Right Hand of a King, according to the *Eaſtern* Cuſtom, is the very next Place of Dignity to the King himſelf. Hence *Solomon* ſitting on his Royal Throne, commanded his Mother to be ſet on his Right Hand, 1 *Kings* ii. *ver.* 19. Conſequently the third Place of Dignity in the Kingdom is deſcrib'd by ſitting at the King's Left Hand; for accordingly as any Man was greater in the Kingdom, ſo in the Publick Aſſemblies he ſat nearer to the King. To this

Petition

Petition of *Salome*, our bleſſed Lord having firſt by the way given a Check to her Vanity, and her erroneous Opinion about his Kingdom, at length, *ver.* 23. He thus more directly anſwers, *To ſit on my Right Hand, and on my Left, is not mine to give, but it ſhall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.* Chriſt ſpeaks as Man in the State of Humiliation, referring all things of his Kingdom (according to his manner) to his Father, from whom he receiv'd it. But as to our preſent purpoſe: Our Saviour denies not that there ſhall be a Right Hand and a Left Hand Place, as a firſt and ſecond Place of Dignity, and conſequently a third Place, and ſo downwards, in his heavenly Kingdom, yea, he plainly aſſerts, that there ſhall be ſuch Degrees of Honour therein; but he only teacheth, that thoſe Places and Degrees ſhall be diſtributed, according to the Pleaſure of his Father, who beſt knows who are fitteſt for them; and that this Pleaſure of God was not yet to be made known, either to *Salome* and her Sons, or to any of

of the Sons of Men; but the Diſcovery of it to be reſerv'd to the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God at the laſt Day. So that this *Text* very manifeſtly confirms the Propoſition; eſpecially if we add the Words of our Saviour preſently afterwards in the ſame Chapter, ſpoken upon the ſame Occaſion, *ver.* 26, 27. *Whoſoever will be great among you, let him be your Miniſter: And whoſoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant.* For hence St. *Jerom* thus argues againſt *Jovinian*, [b] "*If we* "*ſhall be equal in Heaven, we in vain* "*humble our ſelves here, that we may be* "*greater there.*" Indeed our Saviour in theſe words moſt plainly acknowledgeth, that there ſhall be ſome greater, ſome leſſer, ſome firſt or chief, ſome inferior in his heavenly Kingdom; and he ſhews that the only way to attain a Pre-eminence hereafter, is by the loweſt Humility here, and by condeſcending to the

[b] *Si omnes in cœlo æquales futuri ſumus, fruſtra nos hîc humillamus, ut ibi poſſimus eſſe majores.* Lib. 2. contr. Jovin. c. 18.

Meaneſt for their ſpiritual Good and Advantage.

The ſame Doctrine is plainly taught us (whatever ſome learned Men have fancied to the contrary) from the very Scope of the Parable of our Saviour, *Luke* xix. of the *ten Servants*, who received of their Lord, being to go into a far Country, each of them a Pound, to trade with till his Return. At which time he that had encreas'd his Pound to ten Pounds, was made *Ruler over ten Cities*, *ver.* 16, 17. and he that gain'd but five Pounds was made *Ruler over five Cities*, *ver.* 18, 19. the Lord's Reward bearing Proportion to the ſeveral Improvements made by his Servants.

To the ſame Senſe and Purpoſe very many of the ancient Fathers, and the moſt learned modern Interpreters, generally expound thoſe words of our Saviour, *John* xiv. *ver.* 2. *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions.* The Multitude of Manſions in Heaven ſeems hardly intelligible, without admitting a Difference of Degrees in the heavenly Glo-

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ry. For if all the Saints ſhould be placed in one and the ſame Degree or Station of Bliſs, they would have all one and the ſame Manſion in Heaven; but in our heavenly Father's Houſe there are μοναὶ πολλαὶ *many Manſions*, ſome higher, ſome lower, according to the Meaſure of Proficiency in Vertue, which Men have attain'd to in this Life. So *Clemens Alexandrinus*, [c] "*There are with the Lord* "*many Rewards and Manſions, according* "*to the Proportion of Mens Lives.* So alſo *Tertullian*, [d] *How are there many Manſions with the Father, but according to the Variety of Merits?* that is, (in the Language of thoſe Writers) the good Works of Men. So the Fathers of the Church afterward alledg'd this Text againſt *Jovinian*, who held a Parity of Rewards in the Life to come.

Another common Proof of this Doctrine is taken out of the firſt Epiſtle to

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[c] Εἰσὶ γὰρ παρ' κυρίῳ καὶ μισθοὶ καὶ μοναὶ πλείονες, κατ' ἀναλογίαν βίων, Strom 4. p. 488.

[d] *Quomodo multæ manſiones apud Patrem, ſi non pro varietate meritorum?* Scorpiace.

the *Corinthians*, *Chap.* xv. *ver.* 41, 42. *There is one Glory of the Sun, and another Glory of the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars, for one Star differeth from another Star in Glory: So alſo is the Reſurrection of the Dead.* It is true, in the *Context* of this Place, the manifeſt Scope and Intent of the *Apoſtle* is to ſhew the vaſt Difference between thoſe Bodies of ours that die and turn to Corruption, and the glorious Bodies we ſhall receive at the Reſurrection. But yet, in theſe Words it ſeems plain, that the Apoſtle riſeth higher, and by the way ſets forth the Diſparity that there will be at the Reſurrection, even among the glorified Bodies of the Saints; ſome ſhining with brighter, ſome with leſſer Rays of Glory: As among the heavenly Lights, ſome are more glorious than others. As if he ſhould have ſaid, There is a Difference, not only between the Terreſtrial and Celeſtial Bodies, but even the Celeſtial Bodies differ among themſelves; the Sun being the brighteſt of the heavenly Lights, the Moon in its Appearance

pearance to us the next to it; and among the Stars, ſome being more bright and conſpicuous than others. So in the Reſurrection, not only the glorifyed Bodies of the *Saints* ſhall differ from their corruptible Bodies they had here, but alſo among thoſe glorify'd Bodies themſelves, there ſhall be Degrees of Glory.

Unleſs we thus expound the *Apoſtle*, it will be hard to give a tolerable Account of his Diſcourſe in this Place. For we muſt otherwiſe ſuppoſe, that he compares thoſe *Bodies* that *are ſown in Corruption*, the rotten ſtinking Carkaſſes of Men, to ſome of the glorious *heavenly Lights*, though of a leſſer Magnitude; than which Compariſon, what can be more incongruous or abſurd? Hence *Tertullian* in the Place, in part already cited, thus underſtands the Text, [a] *How are there many Manſions with the Father, unleſs it be according to the Variety of Men's good Works? How alſo ſhall one Star differ*

[a] *Quomodo multæ Manſiones apud Patrem, ſi non pro varietate meritorum? Quomodo & Stella à Stella diſtabit, niſi pro diverſitate radiorum?*

from another Star in Glory, but according to the Diverſity of Rays or Beams of Light? And as the greateſt, ſo the beſt part of modern *Interpreters*, acknowledge this Expoſition of the *Apoſtle*'s Words to be true and genuine, yea and abſolutely neceſſary.

But our laſt Text of Scripture will put the Matter out of all doubt, which we read, 2 *Cor.* ix. *ver.* 6. *But this I ſay, he which ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap ſparingly, and he which ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap alſo bountifully.* It is certain and confeſs'd by all, that the Deſign of the *Apoſtle* in this Place, is to excite and ſtir up the *Corinthians* to a liberal Charity towards their diſtreſſed Brethren, and that his chief Argument is contain'd in theſe Words. It is confeſs'd alſo, that in theſe Words, *to ſow*, ſignifies to do good Works, particularly *Works of Charity*; *to reap*, to receive the Reward, the future eternal Reward of ſuch Works. Indeed the *Apoſtle* other-where plainly interprets himſelf to this Senſe; *viz.* *Gal.* vi. *ver.* 8. *He that ſoweth to his Fleſh, ſhall*

ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption; but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap Life everlaſting. Where alſo the latter words manifeſtly reſpect in the firſt Place *Works of Charity and Beneficence*, particularly ſuch as are exercised towards our ſpiritual Teachers, as appears from *ver. 6. Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.* Now our *Apoſtle*, in the Place alledg'd out of his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, expreſsly aſſerts, That as our *ſowing* is more ſparing or more liberal, ſo ſhall our *reaping* be alſo; the greater Charity exerciſed by us in this World, the greater Felicity and Happineſs attends us in the World to come. And ſo on the contrary, the thinner our Seeds of Charity are ſown here, the leſſer will be our Harveſt of Glory hereafter. Nothing can be more expreſs to our Purpoſe than this Teſtimony, and therefore I ſhall ſeek after no other, or farther Proofs from Scripture, of the Propoſition I have undertaken to demonſtrate.

But to these direct Testimonies of Scripture, I shall only add, by way of *overplus*, one or two Reasons, or Arguments grounded on Scripture.

1. It is certain, *that amongst the Damn'd there will be an Inequality of Punishments, some suffering lesser, others greater Degrees of Torment; therefore it is highly reasonable to think, that in the opposite State of the Blessed, there will be also a Disparity of Rewards.* The Antecedent is determin'd, and beyond all Contradiction asserted by our Saviour himself. For speaking of the Town or City that shall reject the *Gospel* preach'd to them by the Apostles, he tells us, that *it shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment, than for that City*, Matth. x. *ver.* 15. And in the next Chapter he assures us, *that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida*, who had heard his Doctrine and seen his Miracles, and would be converted by neither of them; and that *it shall*

be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom, than for *Capernaum*, upon the ſame Account, *Matth.* xi. *ver.* 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. And moſt expreſs are his words, *Luke* xii. *ver.* 47, &c. *And that Servant which knew his Maſter's Will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his Will, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes: But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of Stripes, ſhall be beaten with few Stripes. For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required, and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

2. *There are Degrees of Honour and Glory among the Angels in Heaven*, and though they are all of them glorious Creatures, yet among them ſome are higher, ſome inferior in Dignity, ſome are greater, others leſſer; *therefore we have reaſon to conclude, that there will be an Order and Gradation among the bleſſed Saints of Heaven likewiſe.* For we are ſure, that in the future State we ſhall be like unto the Angels; and why not in this? Seeing in the Angelical

Polity

Polity there are divers Orders, Ranks and Degrees, can we imagin that the Communion of the Saints in Heaven ſhall be a *levell'd Society*? This is utterly incredible. Now the Antecedent here again is moſt evident from Scripture; and though we dare not intrude our ſelves into the things we have not ſeen, or imitate the Temerity of that learned and ſublime Conjecturer *Dionyſius*, who undertakes to reckon up exactly the ſeveral Orders of the Angelical Hierarchy, as if he had ſeen a Muſter of the heavenly Hoſt before his Eyes. Yet that there are Orders and Degrees among the bleſſed Angels, we may with all Aſſurance affirm, having the plaineſt Warrant of the holy Text for the Aſſertion. For we often read in Scripture, not only of Angels, but alſo of Archangels, *i. e.* Chief Angels, that have a Pre-eminence above the reſt. This is ſo known and confeſs'd by every Man, that we need not cite the Texts wherein mention is made of them.

To theſe Reaſons we may add *the Conſent of the Catholick Church* in this Queſtion. It is certain, that it was ever held in the Primitive Church as an undoubted Truth, that there ſhall be a Diſparity of Rewards in the Life to come; and that this was never call'd into queſtion, 'till the conceited Opinioniſt *Jovinian* (among his other Paradoxes) ventur'd to broach the contrary Doctrine. But how he was entertain'd for this, by the moſt eminent Doctors of the Church of his Age, St. *Jerom*, St. *Auſtin*, and others, we very well know. His Obſtinacy in this and other erroneous Tenets, againſt the plaineſt Evidence of Scripture and Reaſon, hath placed him in the black Catalogue of Hereticks.

And 'tis pity that amongſt the reform'd Foreign Divines, there ſhould be any found, that ſhould dare to patronize ſo exploded an Error; eſpecially if we conſider the very weak Arguments by which they endeavour to juſtify their diſſent from the *Catholick Church*. To the brief Examination of which Arguments,

ments, we are in the next Place to proceed.

1. They ſay *they cannot conceive how this Doctrine can be maintain'd, without admitting with the Papiſts the Merit of good Works.* For, if as our Labour is greater or leſſer in God's Service here, our Reward ſhall be greater or leſſer in the Life to come; then there is a Proportion obſerv'd between our Labour or Work, and the Reward. And this neceſſarily infers the Merit of our Work or Labour.

I anſwer, that this Objection is founded on a plain Miſtake of the Doctrine of Scripture, which we defend. For when we ſay with the holy Scriptures, *that every Man ſhall receive his own Reward according to his own Labour*, we do not mean that there will be an exact Proportion between a Man's Labour and his Reward; for it is certain that the higheſt Degree of Grace, can never equal the loweſt Degree of Glory, nor can the beſt of Saints by all that he can do, deſerve ſo much as to be

be a *Door-kreeper* in the Houſe of his Heavenly Father: But the Proportion here, is between the Work and Reward of one good Man, compar'd with the Work and Reward of another; and in this Compariſon the Proportion is exact.

A very learned Father of our Church explains this by an appoſite Similitude, which I ſhall give you, as near as may be in his own Words Tranſlated: [f] "Suppoſe, ſaith he, three Husband-"men to be employ'd in cultivating or "dreſſing the Field of ſome Prince; "one for one Day only, another for "three Days, the third for ſix Days. "Now if the Prince out of his Royal "Bounty ſhall give to the firſt a thou-"ſand Talents, to the ſecond three "thouſand Talents, to the third ſix "thouſand; it is evident that the Re-"ward is meaſur'd out to each of theſe, "according to the different Meaſure of "their Labour: But yet it were ridicu-"lous for a Man hence to conclude,

[f] *Davenant de Juſt. Act. p. 608.*

" that the Labour of him that wrought " six Days, deserv'd six thousand Ta- " lents, yea or so much as six Talents, " yea or so much as one Talent, and so " in the rest. After the same manner " are we to conceive of the divine Re- " muneration. For altho' we affirm, " that God Measures out to every " Man a different Degree of Glory, ac- " cording to the different Measure of his " Labour, yet it doth not follow from " hence, that between the Work and " Reward of one and the same Man, " there is an equality of Proporton; " but only that between the different " Works and Rewards of different Men, " there is an equality of Proportionality. " If therefore the Work of any Man, " be compar'd with the Reward of the " same Man, *viz.* Eternal Life, we " may presently discern an infinite Ine- " quality between them; but if the " Works of different Men, and the Re- " wards of different Men be compar'd, " according to the Degrees of Eminence " in the same Life eternal, there will

" appear

"appear an accurate Proportionality. "And this is to Reward every Man "according to his own Labour."

I need not ſay any more in anſwer to this Argument, and ſhall therefore paſs to the next.

2. They thus argue. *The future Glory of the Saints, is the Purchaſe of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs which is alike imputed to all true Believers, and they have an equal ſhare therein, and conſequently they ſhall ſhare equally in the future Glory.*

I anſwer, The Doctrine of the imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as it hath been too commonly taught and underſtood, hath been a fruitful Mother of many pernicious and dangerous Errors in Divinity. In this Objection, it is ſuppos'd, that the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt is ſo imputed to every Believer, that it becomes *formally his* Righteouſneſs, and that upon the ſole account thereof he hath a Right to the future Glory. And if this were true, if Chriſt's Righteouſneſs were thus ours,

that Righteouſneſs being the moſt perfect Righteouſneſs, nothing leſs could anſwer it than the higheſt Reward in Heaven; and ſo indeed it would neceſſarily follow, that the future Glory of all the Saints ſhould be alike and equal. But this Suppoſition hath no Foundation in Scripture, yea it is plainly falſe. And that it is ſo, if we had no other Argument, the very Doctrine we are now upon were ſufficient to evince. We have proved by very plain Texts of Scripture, that there will be a Diſparity of Rewards in the Life to come, according to the Diſparity of Men's Graces and good Works in this Life; and from hence we may ſafely conclude, that the Doctrine of thoſe who teach that the perfect Righteouſneſs of Chriſt is *formally* the Righteouſneſs of every Believer, and that thereupon he hath a Right to the higheſt Reward in Heaven, is certainly falſe. Nay indeed, if that Doctrine of theirs were true, a Conſequence would follow, which cannot be utter'd without trembling, that every Saint ſhall be

be equal to Chriſt in Glory; Chriſt's Righteouſneſs being his, and ſo he having a Right to whatſoever that Righteouſneſs deſerv'd.

But to anſwer more directly to the Objection, there is nothing more certain, than that the future Glory of the Saints, is the Purchaſe of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs. But how? By the meritorious Obedience of Chriſt in his Life and Death, a Covenant of Grace, Mercy and Life eternal was procur'd, ratify'd and eſtabliſh'd between God and the ſinful Sons of Men; the Condition of this Covenant is *Faith working by Love*, or a Faith fruitful of good Works; and there is alſo ſufficient Grace promis'd to all that ſhall heartily ſeek it for the Performance of that Condition. 'Tis from this Covenant of infinite Mercy in Chriſt Jeſus alone, that our imperfect good Works have any Ordination to ſo excellent a Reward, as the future Glory; and it is the Mercy, the rich Mercy, the royal Bounty and Liberality of God, expreſs'd in the ſame Covenant, that

aſſigns to greater Degrees of Grace here, greater Degrees of Glory hereafter. This is the plain Truth. But to be ſhort, and to ſhew the perfect Sophiſtry of this Objection, I ask the Objectors, whether they do not acknowledge that the *preſent Grace* of the Saints in this Life, is as well the Purchaſe of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, as their future Glory? They muſt, they will, they do confeſs it. Now then, according to their Argument it will follow, that all the Saints have equal Degrees of Grace in this Life, becauſe they have an equal ſhare, in the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, by which that Grace was Purchas'd; than which Aſſertion, nothing can be more notoriouſly falſe. This their Argument therefore is a manifeſt Fallacy.

3. Their laſt Objection is taken from the Parable of our Saviour, *Matth.* xx. *ver* 1, *&c.* Where *the Kingdom of Heaven*, that is, the Church of God, is compar'd *to a Vineyard*, the Maſter whereof went out *in the Morning to hire*

Labourers, and agreed with them for a Penny a Day. Three Hours after, or *at the third Hour*, he went out and hired more; and ſo again *at the ſixth and ninth Hours*; yea *at the eleventh Hour* he did likewiſe. And when they came all to receive their Wages, he gave the laſt he had hired, as much as he had agree'd for with the firſt, *viz.* every one a Penny, neither more nor leſs. Whence they infer that the future Reward, ſignify'd by this Penny, ſhall not be proportion'd according to the difference of Men's Works, but be one and the ſame to all.

I anſwer, This Parable belongs not at all to the Matter in Queſtion; ſeeing the Scope of it is to juſtify God's Proceedings, in the Diſpenſation of his Grace towards the Church of the *Jews*, and that of the *Gentiles*; the latter of which was not call'd, till a long time after the former; and tho' being ſo much junior to it, yet was made its equal in the Benefits and Bleſſings of God's gracious Covenant. The *Jews* were firſt hired

into the Vineyard betimes in the Morning, in the more early Ages of the World, in the Days of *Abraham*, with whom and his Poſterity, God made a ſpecial Covenant of Grace and Mercy; and in the after Ages (which ſeem to be ſignify'd in the Parable, by the *third*, and *ſixth* and *ninth* Hours) at ſuch times as the true Religion, was in danger to fail among them, he by extraordinary Means and Inſtruments, rais'd and reſtor'd it again; as in the Days of *Moſes*, and *Elias*, and after the Captivity of *Babylon*. But the *Gentiles* were not call'd into the Vineyard, till the Day was far ſpent, in the laſt Time and Diſpenſation; (undoubtedly ſignify'd in the Parable by the *eleventh* Hour) and yet theſe by the Goodneſs of their heavenly Maſter, are admitted to the ſame Priviledges with the *Iſraelites*, and they receive the ſame Reward which was promis'd to the *Jews*, with whom the Covenant was firſt made, and who bore the Heat of the Day, whilſt the others ſtood idle.

This Admiſſion of Idolatrous *Gen-*

tiles, upon their Converſion to the Faith of Chriſt, unto equal Privileges with the *Jews*, was a great offence to them, and an occaſion of hardning many of them in their Unbelief, and Rejection of Chriſt's Goſpel. They would rather quit, than ſhare in the Benefits of the Goſpel, with the *Gentiles* whom they ſo much deſpis'd and hated, as if they ſcorn'd to go to Heaven in their Company. This Diſcontent of the *Jews*, at the gracious Diſpenſation of God towards the *Gentiles*, by the Goſpel of Chriſt in the latter Ages, is doubtleſs ſignify'd in the Parable by the Murmuring of thoſe Servants, that were firſt hired into the Vineyard, againſt the equal Retribution given to thoſe Servants, that were hired laſt of all, mention'd *ver.* 11, 12. And now what is all this to the purpoſe of the Objectors?

In a word, It may ſeem ſtrange that any Man ſhould fetch a Proof out of this Chapter for a Parity of Rewards in the Life to come, and that from a Parabolical Diſcourſe deliver'd therein,

and that manifeſtly deſign'd to a quite different Purpoſe; when in the very ſame *Chapter*, *ver.* 23, 26, 27. Our Saviour plainly teacheth the contrary Doctrine, as I have already undeniably evinc'd.

The Objections againſt this Truth, being thus clear'd, I ſhall add only one Caution, neceſſary to prevent the miſunderſtanding of it, *viz.* that though there ſhall be different Degrees of Glory in the Life to come; yet *to every Saint his own Degree ſhall be a ſatisfactory Beatitude.*

To receive thoſe Rivers of Pleaſure, that flow from the Right Hand of God, there will be many Veſſels (if I may uſe the common Similitude) of different Sizes and Capacities, ſome greater, ſome leſſer, but all of them ſhall be fill'd. This different, but in every one ſatisfactory Perception of the future heavenly Bliſs, ſeems to have been typified and repreſented by the *Iſraelites* gathering of *Manna* (that Food of Heaven) in the Wilderneſs; of which we read *Exod.* xvi.

ver. 18. that *he that gathered much, had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack: they gathered every Man according to his own eating.* To explain this as far as we are able, it is to be obſerv'd, that although whilſt we are in this State of Proficiency and running our Race, it be not only lawful, but a laudable Ambition and Emulation in us, to ſtrive to outſtrip and excel each other in Vertue, and ſo to gain the richer Prize; yet when our Race is finiſh'd and the great βραβεύτης or Judge of it hath given his Award, and paſs'd the deciſive Sentence, we muſt not, we ſhall not contend, but fully acquieſce and reſt therein. And then the Servant, who having increas'd his Pound, but to five more, ſhall hear his Lord thus pronouncing, εὖ ἀγαθὲ δοῦλε, *Well done thou good Servant, be thou Ruler over five Cities.* He, I ſay, ſhall be as well pleas'd and ſatisfy'd, as the other Servant, who having made a double Improvement, ſhall receive a proportionable Reward, and *have Authority over ten Cities.*

Among the Bleſſed in Heaven there ſhall be no Diſcontent or Repining, no Pride or Diſdain, no Grudging or Envy; but there ſhall be all Contentment, all Joy, all Thankfulneſs, all Love. They that are ſeated in the higher Manſions of Glory, ſhall not look down with Contempt on thoſe that are beneath them; nor ſhall theſe lift up an envious Eye towards the other; but they ſhall perfectly love and delight in each other: And by an inexpreſſible Union of ſublimated Charity, each ſhall make what the other enjoys his own, and all together ſhall make up in different Notes, one ſweet harmonious Conſort in the Praiſes of God, the fountain of their Bliſs. To this purpoſe is the ſaying of St. *Auſtin* on *John* xiv. *ver.* 2. ſpeaking of the different Rewards of the Bleſſed in Heaven: g "*It comes to paſs through Cha-*
"*rity, that what each hath is common to*
"*all; for thus every Man hath it alſo in*

g *Fit quidem per charitatem, ut quod habent ſinguli, commune ſit omnibus: Sic enim quiſque etiam ipſe habet, cum amat in altero quod ipſe non habet.*

"*himſelf,*

"*himſelf, when he loves and rejoyceth*
"*in, and ſo enjoys in another, what*
"*himſelf hath not.*"

'Tis hard indeed for us Mortals, whilſt we dwell in theſe Houſes of Clay, and are incumber'd with the ſinful Inclinations and Paſſions of this Fleſh, to conceive of this, and to comprehend the Divine Power of exalted Love. But let us conſider, why may not that be among the Saints hereafter, which we are ſure is among the holy Angels now? In that celeſtial Hierarchy, Archangels and Angels, Cherubims and Seraphims, and Thrones, and the lower Orders of thoſe bleſſed Spirits, diſagree not among themſelves, though they differ from one another in Honour and Dignity; but on the contrary, they perfectly love and delight in each other, and all in their God. And in their ſeveral Stations, they readily and chearfully execute the Will and Pleaſure of their great Lord and Maſter, whoſe Miniſters they are; and all together make one Family of Love and Peace, of Joy and Order, and one harmonious

Choir,

Choir, in perfect Conſort, and with raviſhing Melody, ſounding forth the Praiſes of their heavenly King. And thus it ſhall be with the Saints after the Reſurrection, when they ſhall be made ἰσάγγελοι *like unto the Angels*, *i. e.* when they ſhall enjoy the ſame Life immortal which the Angels do, and be joyn'd to them, and incorporated into their bleſſed Society.

And now *laſtly* to apply this whole *Diſcourſe*: Let us, by what hath been ſaid, be excited and ſtir'd up to a diligent, earneſt, and zealous Purſuit after an Increaſe of Vertue, and a greater Proficiency in the ways of Righteouſneſs and Holineſs. Let us ſhun no Labour that comes in our way, and is within our Reach and Compaſs, whereby we may glorify God, and do good to others; for we ſee, the more Grace the more Glory; and the greater and more induſtrious our Labour in God's Service hath been in this Life, the greater and more copious, and abundant ſhall our Reward be in the Life to come. We cannot be

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truly righteous over much, as the ſlothful World would perſuade us, nor can there be any Exceſs or Superfluity in Vertue, or in the Habits and Exerciſes of real Piety and Charity. How great ſoever our Labour be in the Buſineſs of Religion, none of it ſhall be loſt Labour, or *in vain in the Lord.* Every Degree of Grace which we advance to here, ſhall raiſe us a Degree higher in the future Glory. And all the good Works that ever we do, ſhall be recorded in the faithful Regiſter of the divine Omniſcience, and not one of them ſhall be forgotten, or miſs of its Reward. Oh! that this Conſideration might often, and very deeply enter our Thoughts! How would a vigorous Senſe of this Truth awaken and rouſe us out of our Remiſneſs and Negligence in Religion, that too often ſeiſeth on us? How would this inſpirit and animate us to generous Attempts even of Heroick Vertue, which in this degenerate Age are derided, as vain romantick Enterprizes? How often,

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at leaſt would this thought call us from our idle Solitude, or unprofitable Society, to our Prayers and Devotions? How many precious Hours of our Time would it reſcue and redeem, from being miſpent and loſt in Vanity and Folly? How readily ſhould we embrace, yea, how ſtudiouſly ſhould we ſeek after the Opportunities of doing good? For indeed every ſuch Opportunity is an Advantage offer'd us by the good Providence of God, farther to enrich our Souls, and to add to our heavenly Store and Treaſure, the only *true Treaſure*, that *ſhall never fail or be taken from us.*

In a Word, therefore, *Let us in the firſt Place*, (as I ſaid in the beginning of this Diſcourſe) *take care to ſecure our being in a State of Grace*; for [h] *It is a Folly for him, that is not yet ſure of Life, to contend for Honour.* And having done this, let us not reſt here, but advance more and more in that bleſſed State, and go on to Perfection.

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[h] *Incertis de ſalute, de gloriâ minime certandum.*

I con-

I conclude with the Words of St. *Peter* in the Cloſe of this Epiſtle, *Grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; to him be Glory now and for ever,* Amen.

SERMON VIII.

Everlasting Life hoped for by good Men, under the Old Testament; and that the Consideration of the Vanity of the present Life is an effectual Means to make us fix our Minds upon things eternal.

PSALM ciii. *Ver.* 15, 16, and part of the 17th.

As for Man, his days are as Grass: As the Flower of the Field, so he flourisheth. For the

the Wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone, and the Place thereof ſhall know it no more. But the Mercy of the Lord is from everlaſting to everlaſting, upon them that fear him.

THIS *Pſalm* (confeſs'd by all to be a *Pſalm* of *David*) is Euchariſtical throughout: It begins and ends with the moſt devout and affectionate Praiſes and Thankſgivings to Almighty God. For thus the ſweet Singer of *Iſrael* begins the *Pſalm*, *ver.* 1, 2. *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy Name. Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits.* And thus he ends the *Pſalm*, *ver.* 20, 21, 22. *Bleſs the Lord, ye his Angels, that excel in Strength, that do his Commandments, hearkening unto the Voice of his Word. Bleſs the Lord, all ye his Hoſts, ye Miniſters of his, that do his Pleaſure.*

Pleaſure. Bleſs the Lord, all his Works, in all Places of his Dominion. Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul.

The Matter of this Praiſe and Thankſgiving, contain'd in the Body of the *Pſalm*, is of a very large and wide Compaſs, extending itſelf to all the Benefits beſtow'd by God upon Man. But the *Divine Pſalmiſt* more particularly takes notice of two principal Bleſſings of God, belonging to the Faithful; (which are indeed the Matter of two great Articles of our Chriſtian Faith) *The Forgiveneſs of Sin*, and *The Life everlaſting*. The Mercy of the Forgiveneſs of Sin, he celebrates *ver.* 3. *Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities, who healeth all thy Diſeaſes.* And again, in the eighth and following Verſes, *The Lord is merciful and gracious, ſlow to Anger and plenteous in Mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep his Anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our Sins, nor rewarded us according to our Iniquities. For as the Heaven is high above the Earth, ſo great is his Mercy toward them that fear him.*

As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our Transgressions from us. Like as a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our Frame, he remembreth that we are Dust. The Blessing of everlasting Life, after this present vain Life, he sets forth in the Verses which I have chosen for my Text.

In which the *Royal Psalmist* suggests to us a twofold Meditation. (1.) Of the Vanity and Shortness of this present Life, and all the Enjoyments thereof: *As for Man, his Days are as Grass; as the Flower of the Field, so he flourisheth. For the Wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the Place thereof knoweth it no more.* (2.) Of the everlasting Mercy of God to the Faithful in the other Life: *But the Mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him.* For the everlasting Mercy of God here spoken of, being opposed to the short transitory Enjoyments of this present Life, must necessarily signify the Mercy and Goodness of

God to the Faithful in the other Life, which indeed is the only everlasting Mercy. Hence *Aben Ezra*, and other of the *Hebrew* Doctors, saw and acknowledged that this Text speaks of the everlasting Happiness of the Righteous in the Life to come. And the *Chaldee* Paraphrast thus renders the latter part of my Text: *But the Mercy of the Lord is*[i] *in this World, and even in the World to come, upon them that fear him.*

The *Text* thus briefly explain'd, yields us these *two* Observations, which shall be the Subject of my *Discourse* at this time. 1. That *good Men, even under the Law, or Old Testament, look'd beyond this present, vain, transitory Life, and believ'd and hop'd for an everlasting Happiness in the Life to come.* 2. That *a serious Consideration of the Vanity and Shortness of this present Life, and all the Enjoyments thereof, is an effectual Means to bring us to God, and to make us fix our Hopes on him, and things eternal.*

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[i] מן עלמא ועד עלמא דאתי על דחלוהי

1. That *good Men, even under the Law, or Old Teſtament, look'd beyond this preſent vain, tranſitory Life, and believ'd and hoped for an everlaſting Happineſs in the Life to come.* For ſuch a Faith and Hope, you ſee, *David* plainly expreſſeth in this *Text*, and the ſame he often otherwhere declares in this divine Book of *Pſalms*. Indeed in all thoſe Places, wherein he ſhews the Vanity and Shortneſs of this Life, and that there is no ſolid, ſubſtantial, and ſtable Happineſs to be found here below; and yet, with the ſame Breath, ſets forth the great Happineſs of the Faithful, in their Truſt and Dependence on God's Goodneſs and Mercy; I ſay, in all thoſe Places, he evidently points his Finger towards Heaven, and directs our Thoughts to the Bliſs and Happineſs of a future State. You may eſpecially find it in *Pſalm* xxxix. *ver.* 5, 6, 7. *Behold thou haſt made my Days as an hand-breadth, and mine Age is as nothing before thee: Verily, every Man at his beſt State is altogether Vanity. Surely every Man*

walketh in a vain ſhew; ſurely they are diſquieted in vain: He heapeth up Riches, and knoweth not who ſhall gather them. And now, Lord, what wait I for? My Hope is in thee.

To the ſame Purpoſe are thoſe *Pſalms* of *David*, wherein he amply deſcribes the proſperous and flouriſhing Eſtate of many wicked Men; and on the other ſide, the calamitous and afflicted Condition of many good and virtuous in this World; and yet in the Cloſe pronounceth Theſe to be moſt happy Men, and the Other to be moſt miſerable; which cannot be true, but on Suppoſition of a future State and Reſurrection. Of this ſort are the xlix^th and lxxiii^d *Pſalms* throughout.

But what need we ſearch far into the *Book of Pſalms*? The very firſt *Pſalm* affords us a clear Proof of this Truth. For therein *David* firſt ſhews the Bleſſedneſs of the godly Man in the firſt and following Verſes: *Bleſſed is the Man that walketh not in the Counſel of the Ungodly, nor ſtandeth in the way of Sinners, nor ſitteth*

in

in the Seat of the Scornful. But his Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate Day and Night, &c. And then, on the contrary, he declares the miserable Condition of the Ungodly, *ver.* 4, 5. *The Ungodly are not so*, (*i. e.* they are not blessed as the Righteous; but are indeed very miserable Men) *they are like the Chaff which the Wind driveth away. Therefore*, or because *the Ungodly shall not stand in the Judgment, nor Sinners in the Congregation of the Righteous.*

Now what Judgment or Tribunal of God is that, to which all the Ungodly shall be cited, in which none of them shall be able to stand? *i. e.* to carry their Cause, but they shall all, *causâ cadere, be cast, and utterly overthrown?* Certainly this cannot be understood of any Judgment of God exercis'd in this Life. For here wicked Men often prosper, and go out of the World without any discernable Mark of God's Judgment on them. And on the other side, many good Men, as to the things of

this World, are caſt and overthrown, ruin'd and undone. *David* therefore undoubtedly ſpeaks of a *Judgment to come.* And accordingly the Author of the *Targum*, or *Chaldee* Paraphraſe, thus renders the words, [m] *The Ungodly ſhall not be juſtified in the Great Day.* The Great Day, *i. e.* the Day of the laſt Judgment, the Day of the great Aſſize, wherein all Men ſhall receive their final Doom and Sentence, call'd by St. *Peter* the *Day of the Lord*, 2 *Pet.* iii. 10. Again, what is that *Congregation of the Righteous*, wherein *no Sinner ſhall appear?* Surely there neither is, nor ever was, nor ever will be, any ſuch unmix'd Company of righteous Men to be found in this World. Here the Chaff and the Wheat, the Good and Bad, are mingl'd together; but a winnowing time of Judgment will come, wherein the *Wicked ſhall be as the Chaff which the Wind driveth away*, (as the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſeth it) and nothing but the pure and clean

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[m] לָא יִזְכּוֹן חַיָּבַיָּא בְּיוֹמָא רַבָּא

Wheat

Wheat ſhall remain and be laid up in God's *Granary*. There ſhall then (as our Saviour aſſures us) be a Congregation or gathering together, from one end of the Heavens to the other, of all God's Elect, who have been from the beginning of the World; which being placed at the Right Hand of the Judge, ſhall receive that joyful Sentence, *Come, ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World.* In this Congregation of the Righteous, no Sinner ſhall be found: The Ungodly ſhall be placed altogether in another Herd, at the Judge's Left Hand, and hear that dreadful Sentence, *Go ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* This is the clear Senſe of thoſe words of the *Pſalmiſt, The Ungodly are not ſo; but are like the Chaff which the Wind driveth away. Therefore the Ungodly ſhall not ſtand in the Judgment, nor Sinners in the Congregation of the Righteous.* And by theſe Texts it is evident, that *David* believ'd a future State, and a Judgment to come.

Nor was this Faith peculiar to *David*, but a receiv'd Notion among the *Jews*, in the Time and Age wherein *David* liv'd. For it appears that the *Jews* then generally believ'd the Immortality and Subsistence of the Soul of Man, after the Death of the Body, and consequently a future State of Happiness or Misery, according to the Works and Actions of Men in this Life respectively. This, I say, appears (if we had no other Evidence of it) from the History of *Saul*, desiring to consult the Prophet *Samuel* after he was dead, 1 *Sam.* xxviii. *Chap.* the eleventh and following Verses. For that History (which way soever you determine the old Dispute, whether it was indeed the Soul of *Samuel* that gave him answer, or an *evil Spirit* personating the *holy Prophet*) undeniably proves that *Saul* (as little true Religion as he had, yet) believ'd that the Soul of *Samuel* was still in being, and alive, after his Body was dead and laid in the Grave; from whence it is plain, that the Doctrine of the *Soul's Immorta-*

Immortality was no News to the Men of that Age.

In the Writings of King *Solomon*, the Son of *David*, we find ſome very clear Declarations of *the Immortality of Man's Soul, and of a future State.* Such is that in the twelfth Chapter of *Eccleſiaſtes*, *ver.* 7. *Then ſhall the Duſt return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit ſhall return unto God who gave it.* The plain and evident Senſe of which words is this: Whereas Man conſiſts of two parts, *Body* and *Soul*, the Condition of theſe two when he dies will be very different. For the Body being firſt taken out of the Duſt of the Earth, and ſo of a corruptible Conſtitution, ſhall go back into the Earth again, and moulder into Duſt; but the Soul, as it is of another, and more noble Original, (as being at firſt breathed immediately from God himſelf into the Body) ſhall not periſh with the Body, but return to God and the Regions above. For *Solomon* ſeems to ſpeak of the End of Man, according to God's primary and antecedent Will and Intention;

tion; which was, *that the Soul of Man after Death ſhould go to God, and the heavenly Beings*; and not of the conſequent Event of things happening through Mens Sin and Wickedneſs; whereby it comes to paſs, that the Souls of many Men, when they die, go to the *Devil*, and the *infernal Regions*. Though it is true alſo, that the Spirit of every Man after Death, good or bad, in ſome Senſe goes to God, and returns into his Hands, to be kept *ſomewhere* under the Cuſtody of his Almighty Power, in order to the receiving of his final Sentence at the laſt Judgment, either of Life, or Death eternal. And accordingly the wiſe Man, a little after in the ſame Chapter, ſubjoins the *Article* of the future univerſal Judgment, and that as an Argument to perſuade Men, not to acquieſce in theſe worldly Vanities, but to make *Religion* and *the Service of God* their chief Deſign and Buſineſs; *ver.* 13, 14. *Let us hear the Concluſion of the whole Matter, Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole* [Duty] *of Man.*

For

For God ſhall bring every Work into Judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. This was *Solomon*'s Faith.

Let us proceed to the following Ages. After theſe times it pleas'd the good and gracious God, to afford his People a mighty and moſt convincing Evidence of the future, heavenly and immortal Life in the Tranſlation of *Elias*, of which you read 2 *Kings Chap.* ii. *ver.* 11, 12. that he was taken up by God in a *fiery Chariot into Heaven*, and that in the ſight of *Eliſha* who afterwards ſaw him no more. And this was left upon Record, ſo that none of the *Jews* who read the Hiſtory, could be ignorant of this wonderful Work of God.

In the Writings of the ſucceeding Prophets, there are many Paſſages, which an equal and unprejudic'd Reader can not but believe have a proſpect to the Life to come. But becauſe they are liable to ſome Cavils and Exceptions (occaſion'd by the Obſcurity of the Prophetick Stile) which I have not now time

to

to consider, I shall at present wave them, and proceed to some other instances.

In the time of the Captivity liv'd the Penman of the 102^d *Psalm*, as clearly appears from the thirteenth and following Verses; and he is thought by some learned Interpreters to have been *Nehemiah*. But whoever was the Writer of the Psalm, we have therein a very remarkable Passage to our purpose in the twenty sixth and following Verses: *Of old hast thou laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Work of thy Hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure, yea, all of them shall wax old like a Garment: as a Vesture shalt thou change them and they shall be changed.* Here it is most plainly asserted, that as the Heavens and the Earth were at first created and made by the Almighty Power of God, so by the same Power they shall one Day, as to their present Constitution, perish and be dissolv'd, and that a change or new State of Things shall ensue.

Now

Now what is this, I beſeech you, but the very Doctrine of St. *Peter* concerning the laſt Day of Judgment 2 *Pet.* iii. *ver.* 10 and 13. *But the Day of the Lord will come as a Thief in the Night, in the which the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great Noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat, the Earth alſo and all the Works that are therein ſhall be burnt up. Nevertheleſs we according to his promiſe, look for new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs.* Certainly the End or Diſſolution of this preſent World, and a future State or World to come, have a neceſſary Connexion one with the other, and are both alike Matters of divine Revelation. Nor can it be imagin'd why, and to what purpoſe the former ſhou'd be reveal'd to the Sons of Men, without the latter. But beſides, as I have already noted, the words of the *Pſalmiſt* expreſly ſpeak of a *Change* of things, at the End and Diſſolution of this preſent World; ſuch a Change, as when a Man puts off, folds up and lays aſide an old Garment,

ment, and puts on a new and freſh one.

I ſhall only farther remark here, that the antient Oracles, attributed to the *Sibyll*'s, extant before our Saviour's Time (which in great part had their Original from the *Jewiſh Theology*) ſpake alſo of the laſt great Conflagration, or Diſſolution of this preſent World. For ſo *Ovid* teſtifieth

Eſſe quoque in fatis reminiſcitur affore tempus,
Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regia Cœli
Ardeat, & mundi moles operoſa laboret.

That in them there was mention of a time appointed by the divine Decree, wherein Heaven and Earth ſhould be all on Fire, and the vaſt Fabrick of this World ſhould ſink in the Flames thereof.

My next inſtance ſhall be taken from the Book entituled *The Wiſdom of Solomon*, which though it be not Canonical, is yet an ancient and venerable Writing, undoubtedly extant before our Saviour's

Saviour's time, and is a competent and ſufficient Witneſs of the Faith and belief of the Church in the time wherein it was written. In the ſecond *Chapter* of that Book from the firſt to the twentieth *Verſe* incluſively, the Author elegantly repreſents the baſe and vile Sentiments of ungodly *Infidels*, concerning the Life to come. And then in the four laſt *Verſes* of the ſame *Chapter*, and the four firſt *Verſes* of the following *Chapter*, againſt that wicked Doctrine, he oppoſeth the Catholick Truth, receiv'd and believ'd by the Church of God in his time, in theſe words. *Such things they did imagine, and were deceiv'd; for their own Wickedneſs hath blinded them. As for the Myſteries of God, they knew them not, neither hoped they for the Wages of the Righteous, nor diſcern'd a Reward for blameleſs Souls. For God created Man to be immortal, and made him to be an Image of his own Eternity. Nevertheleſs through Envy of the Devil came Death into the World, and they that hold of his ſide do find it. But the Souls*

of

of the Righteous are in the Hand of God, and there ſhall no Torment touch them. In the ſight of the Unwiſe, they ſeemed to die, and their departure is taken for Miſery, and their going from us to be utter Deſtruction; but they are in Peace. For though they be puniſh'd in the ſight of Men, yet is their hope full of Immortality.

My laſt inſtance ſhall be in thoſe Old Teſtament *Martyrs*, that matchleſs Woman and her ſeven Sons, who, for adhering to the Law of God, ſuffer'd under the impious mercileſs Tyrant *Antiochus*; whoſe Hiſtory you may read in the ſeventh *Chapter* of the ſecond Book of *Maccabees*. What exquiſite Torments did they ſuffer with the greateſt Courage, in hope of a bleſſed Reſurrection, which they all openly profeſs'd to the Face of the Tyrant? How did they ſcorn the offer of Life and Honour too, upon their compliance with the ſinful Terms propos'd to them? But the words of the laſt of the ſeven Sons, ſpeaking of his Brethren that dy'd before

fore him, are expreſs, and moſt remarkable *ver.* 26 *Our Brethren, which now have ſuffer'd a ſhort Pain, are dead under God's Covenant of everlaſting Life.* I ſcarce know where to find an inſtance of greater Faith and Fortitude in any of our Chriſtian Martyrologies. And as to the Truth of the Hiſtory, it was never queſtion'd in the *Jewiſh* Church, as appears from *Joſephus* and their other Writers. And it is moreover confirm'd by the divine Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, who manifeſtly refers to it, *Chap.* xi. *ver.* 35. Where diſcourſing of the Faith and Patience of the Saints before Chriſt, he mentions ſome *who were tortur'd, not accepting Deliverance, that they might receive a better Reſurrection.*

By theſe Teſtimonies and Inſtances it ſufficiently appears, that good Men under the Law, did not live and die like Swine, feeding only on the Husks of theſe earthly Vanities, as ſome have fooliſhly imagin'd. They had undoubtedly a future State in their Eye, and liv'd by

the Faith of it, as well as we. This Faith was first deriv'd, not from the Law of *Moses* (for that in the letter of it promis'd nothing beyond this Life) but from the gracious Revelation of God to Mankind from the beginning. For the clearing whereof we are to remember, what the Author of the Book of Wisdom in the place before cited tells us, and the Church of God always believ'd, *viz.* that *God created Man to be immortal, and made him to be an Image of his own Eternity*; and that *through the envy of the Devil, Death enter'd into the World*, Wisd. *Chap.* ii. *ver.* 23, 24. That is, that our first Parents in Paradise were design'd to a Life immortal, if they had not sinn'd. And indeed in the History of *Genesis*, we expresly read, that they were forbidden only *the Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil*, being freely allow'd to eat of all the other *Trees*, the *Tree of Life* not excepted. Which doubtless was so call'd, because it was either a Symbol and Sacrament, or an Instrument or Means of Immortality, or both.

And we there read also, that *Death was threatned to our first Parents, as a Punishment to them if they should transgress the Command of God given them.* Which evidently implies, that if they had not sinn'd, they should not have died. Indeed, how could they understand the Sanction otherwise, and what Force could it have had on them, to deter them from sinning, if they had thought they should have died, whether they had sinn'd or not? And therefore St. *Paul* expressly teacheth us, *that by the Sin of the first Man* (and no otherwise) *Death enter'd into the World*, in the fifth Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*, and in other Places.

By his Sin then, *Adam* lost *Paradise*, and that whereof it was a Figure, *Heaven* too. He was debarr'd from the Sacrament of Immortality, the Sentence of Death being pass'd upon him. But was he utterly left in this sad Estate, without Hope of Recovery? The *Church of God* hath always believ'd that he repented, and laid hold on the Mercy of a *second*

Covenant, and was receiv'd again into divine Favour; although there be no expreſs mention of this in his Hiſtory. Thus, we do not read of any Precept or Law given by God to *Adam* after his Fall, but we find the Practice of ſacrificing in his Family. And it will be very difficult to him that conſiders the Matter thoroughly, to imagine that he invented that Right of his own Head; he was taught it therefore by the Command and Inſtitution of God. And it is highly reaſonable to think, that at the ſame time, when God gave a ſecond Law and Inſtitution, he encourag'd him alſo to the Obedience of it, by a Promiſe of Acceptance and Reſtitution to his former Favour. Upon this Hope doubtleſs he renew'd his Allegiance to his Creator, and devoted himſelf to the Worſhip and Service of God, and taught his Sons, *Cain* and *Abel*, to do ſo likewiſe. From him they learn'd to preſent their ſeveral Offerings to the Lord, *Gen.* iv. where we read alſo, *ver.* 4, 5. that *God had reſpect to Abel's Offering*,

and

and declar'd his Acceptance of it by ſome viſible Sign, taken notice of by his Brother *Cain*; probably, as the *Hebrew* Doctors tell us, *by a Fire from Heaven, inflaming his Offering.* But how was *Abel*'s Offering accepted by God? Surely not to the obtaining of any of the temporal Bleſſings, or good things of this Life: For on the contrary, for this very Sacrifice which he offer'd to God, he ſoon became himſelf a Sacrifice to the Envy and Malice of his wicked Brother. *Abel* therefore, and his Offering, were accepted by God to the Purpoſes of Salvation, and the obtaining of the good things of the Life to come. And as he was the firſt *Martyr* for Righteouſneſs ſake, that is, upon the Account that he was more righteous than his Brother; ſo he was the firſt *Saint* that enter'd the heavenly Paradiſe.

Moreover, it is certain that *Enoch*, the ſeventh from *Adam*, ſpake of a Life to come, and a future Judgment. For St. *Jude* aſſures us, *ver.* 14 and 15. of his *Epiſtle*, that he expreſsly propheſied, that *God ſhould come with ten thouſand of*

his Saints, or Angels, *to judge all that are ungodly*. And the ſame *Enoch*, as he was a *Preacher* of the Life to come, ſo he was an illuſtrious *Precedent*, or *Example* thereof. For we read, *Gen.* v. *ver.* 24. that *Enoch walk'd with God, and he was not, for God took him*; *i. e.* God took him out of this World, to the Happineſs above, to the Bliſs of Paradiſe. And the Author of *Eccleſiaſticus*, *Chap.* xliv. *ver.* 14. tells us that *Enoch pleaſed God, and was tranſlated, being an Example of Repentance to future Generations.* What God did to *Enoch* was exemplary, and taught all future Generations what they might expect from God, if they walk'd with him as *Enoch* did. So that the Tranſlation of *Enoch* to Heaven, was a Seal and Confirmation of the Doctrine of a Life to come, which he had preach'd to Men while he was here on Earth.

St. *Paul* ſeems plainly to confirm all that hath been ſaid, in his Epiſtle to *Titus*, *Chap.* i. *ver.* 2. where he tells us that *eternal Life was promis'd by God that cannot lie*; πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων, that is (not before

before the Foundation of the World, as our *Tranſlators* render it, for there were *then* no Men to whom ſuch Promiſe might be made, but) *before ancient times*, as the words will bear, or from the beginning of the World. This Promiſe was made to *Adam* in Paradiſe; this Promiſe was renew'd to Mankind preſently after the Fall; it was believ'd by *Adam* and his Sons; it was preach'd, publiſh'd, yea and exemplified by *Enoch*. By the Faith of this Promiſe, the Patriarchs did and ſuffer'd great things, as the divine Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* excellently reaſons *Chap.* xi. This Promiſe continu'd in Force under the Law, and was not made of no Effect by it; and this ſame Promiſe is now moſt fully reveal'd, ratify'd, eſtabliſh'd, and confirm'd to us by the Goſpel of Chriſt.

In a word, the Doctrine of a future Life and Judgment continu'd inviolate and unqueſtion'd among the Jews, 'till after their Return from the Captivity. After which time (exactly how ſoon, or how long after, ſeems to me uncertain)

there arose the Heresy of the *Sadducees*, who believ'd neither the Immortality of the Soul, nor the Resurrection of the Body, nor the Judgment to come. But concerning these, *Josephus* observes,[n] That *tho' they were generally rich and great Men*, (their Principles leading them to mind and seek after the Riches and Honours of this World) *yet they were very few in number, compar'd to the rest of the Jews.* And accordingly we read, *That when our Blessed Lord had refuted their wicked Doctrine out of the Pentateuch*, or Books of *Moses*, which they themselves acknowledg'd, *the Multitude, as adhering to the old Catholick Faith, applauded his Discourse*, Matth. xxii. *ver.* 33. The same *Josephus* also tells us, *That when any of the Sadducees were admitted to Offices of Publick Trust and Government, they were forced to dissemble their Faith, or rather Infidelity, and to subscribe to the receiv'd Doctrine of the Church of the Jews, because*

[n] *Antiqu. Judaicæ*, l. 18. c. 2.

otherwise

otherwiſe the People would by no Means have endur'd them.

I ſhall only by the way farther add, what divers *Hebrew* Writers of good Note have related, as a certain and known Truth, that ſeveral of that impious Sect, being gotten into the Pontifical Office, when they were about to enter the Sanctuary, were, like *Nadab* and *Abihu*, ſmitten by the Hand of God, a Flame of Fire iſſuing forth from between the *Cherubims* that *cover'd the Ark*, and deſtroying them upon *the ſpot*. A juſt and ſuitable Judgment upon thoſe profane Wretches, who durſt approach that *Type of Heaven*, whilſt in their Hearts they derided the Antitype, believing no other Heaven but what is here on Earth, and ſcoffing at the Reſurrection and future Judgment, without the belief whereof, there can be no ſerious and hearty Worſhip or Service of God.

And thus, I hope, I have ſufficiently clear'd and confirm'd my firſt Obſervation from the Text, that *good Men under the Law or Old Teſtament, look'd beyond*

yond this preſent vain and tranſitory Life, and believ'd and hop'd for an everlaſting Happineſs in the Life to come.

Now this Diſcourſe ſerves to confirm the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, and our belief of it. The great promiſe of the Goſpel, is of a happy Life hereafter to them that live virtuouſly here. That this Promiſe is not deluſory, no new Fiction, or vain Suggeſtion of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, is ſufficiently evident from the Suffrage of the Church of God, before our Saviour's time, and from the beginning. We may ſay of this Promiſe of a future Life, as St *John* doth of the Evangelical Precept of Love, that it is *a new Commandment*, and yet *no new one*, but *an old one*, deliver'd from the beginning, 1 *John Chap.* ii. the 7 and following *Verſes*. So this Promiſe of a future Happineſs to the Righteous, the chief part of that good Tidings which the Goſpel brings us, is a new Promiſe, and yet not new, but an old one. New. it is in reſpect of its clearer Diſcovery and fuller Confirmation

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by Christ; and yet not new, because this Promise was given from the beginning, and good Men in the Church of God, had always the same kind of Hope, that we have. In the Church of God, did I say? Nay, there is no People so barbarous but have had some Notion of a Life to come, this divine Revelation, being deliver'd from the beginning, preserv'd till the Flood, and after the Dispersion of the Sons of *Noah*, convey'd by them to the several Nations descending from them; tho' the Doctrine (as all things entrusted to mere Tradition use to be) was corrupted in the Conveyance.

When therefore we Christians deny ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World, out of an hope to be rewarded in a State remaining after this Life; we venture in the same Bottom, that all good Men of all Nations have done before us. But God be thank'd, if this Notion had never been heard of in the World, before our Saviour's coming,

coming, yet he alone hath brought with him ſuch an aſſurance of it, that there remains no place of doubting to any reaſonable and unprejudic'd Perſon; even by his own moſt glorious Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, abundantly atteſted to us, by the conſtant Sufferings of the many Eye-Witneſſes thereof, upon the account of that very Teſtimony; and by very many unparallell'd Miracles wrought by them, and their Succeſſors a long time after them; whereby indeed the whole Goſpel of Chriſt is clearly evidenc'd. I conclude this with St. *Paul*'s Exhortation, 1 *Cor.* xv. *ver.* the laſt. *Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

And ſo I paſs to the other Obſervation from my Text, which I ſhall diſpatch in a word or two and ſo conclude.

2. *That a ſerious Conſideration of the Vanity and Shortneſs of this preſent Life,* and

and all the Enjoyments thereof, is an effectual means to bring us to God, and to make us fix our hopes on him and things eternal.

For thus it wrought with *David* here, who after he had conſider'd the Vanity of this World in theſe words, *As for Man, his Days are as Graſs; as a Flower of the Field, ſo he flouriſheth. The Wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone, and the Place thereof ſhall know it no more,* he preſently directs his Thoughts to Heaven in the following words, *But the Mercy of the Lord is from everlaſting to everlaſting upon them that fear him.*

If therefore we would have our Hearts brought off to God, and the ſerious purſuit of eternal Things, let us *daily ſtudy the Vanity of this World.* Study it, did I ſay? There ſeems little need of Study, or deep ſearch into this matter. This is a thing that *thruſts* it ſelf upon our Thoughts, ſo that we muſt think of it, unleſs we thruſt it from us.

This Leſſon of the World's Vanity, divine Providence doth preſs and inculcate

cate on us, and as it were *beat* into us. We daily ſee the Viciſſitudes of humane Affairs. We continually hear of the loſſes, troubles or calamities of Friends or Strangers. Yea, ever and anon ſome *croſs* Accident or other befals our ſelves, to let us know, that our Happineſs lies not here. We are daily accoſted with Spectacles of Mortality, and as our Church expreſſeth it, *in the midſt of Life we are in Death.* Alas! that in the midſt of ſo many Remembrancers wherewith Providence hath ſurrounded us, we ſhould with the Monarch in Story, need another Monitor, to tell us every Day, *Remember that thou art mortal!* And yet this is our caſe. What fatal Stupidity is it, that hath ſeiz'd on us? Hath the frequency of theſe Admonitions made them to loſe their force and virtue on us? Or rather, are we affectedly ignorant, and do we wilfully put the evil Day far from us? Whatever the cauſe be, the effect is ſadly viſible.

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The time will ſhortly come, when we ſhall all perfectly underſtand (if we have any underſtanding left in us) the Vanity of this World, when perhaps it will be too late for us to be the better for that Knowledge, too late to mend our Fortunes (if I may ſo ſpeak) or to ſecure our ſelves a happier Condition in another World: I mean when the World ſhall take its leave of us, and we of it, when we come to die. Then the worldling himſelf ſhall be out of love with this World, yea perfectly hate it, and be angry and vex'd to find himſelf ſo miſerably deluded and cheated by it. When all his Treaſures ſhall not be able to redeem his Life from Death; when all his vain and ſinful Delights and Pleaſures ſhall utterly forſake him, and leave nothing behind but a bitter Remembrance of them; when Pain, Anguiſh and Sorrow ſhall take hold of him; when his ſoft Bed ſhall give him no Eaſe, nor his luxurious Table afford him one Morſel of Food or Suſtenance; when his Friends (if he have any) ſhall

ſtand weeping about him, but not be able to help him; when his very Life and Breath ſhall begin to fail him, eſpecially when (if his Conſcience be awaken'd) he ſhall ſee that diſmal State of things that expects him in the other World, *an angry and an Almighty God too, bending his Bow,* (as the *Pſalmiſt* elegantly deſcribes it, *Pſal.* vii. *ver.* 12, 13.) *and making ready his Arrows, and whetting his glittering Sword of Vengeance againſt him:* Thoſe Bailiffs of the divine Juſtice, the Devils, waiting to arreſt his Soul, and carry it to that Priſon, from whence there is no Redemption; and in a word, Hell itſelf opening her Mouth wide to devour him. *Then, then* he will acknowledge *that* to be moſt true, which he had been often told before by the Wiſe, but would not be convinced of it, that to truſt to any thing in this World is a perfect Folly, to neglect God and eternal things a very Madneſs, and that *Religion* and the *Fear of God* is the only *true Wiſdom.* Then he will confeſs, that one Spark of true *Virtue* and *Grace* in the Heart,

Heart, one ſoft whiſper of a *good Conſcience*, one glimpſe of the Light of *God's Countenance*, is more to be valu'd than this whole World.

But it were to be wiſh'd, we would underſtand the *Vanity of this World* at a cheaper Rate, and as becomes wiſe Men, by Foreſight and Conſideration, and not learn it only from that Miſtreſs of Fools, *ſad Experience*. Yea, let us anticipate and be beforehand with this perfidious World, by breaking off our League with it, before it thus miſerably diſappoints us. Let us now, preſently, (if we have not before done it) entirely devote and give up our ſelves to the Service of God, and the ſerious Purſuit of eternal things. Let us renew our baptiſmal Vow, and once again in good earneſt renounce the *World, with all its Vanities*. And let us do this ſeaſonably, and in due time, whilſt we may be accepted of God, whilſt we are in ſuch Circumſtances, that our abandoning the Vanities of this World, and the Devotion of our Hearts and Affections to God and heavenly

things, may be accounted a Free-will Offering, and not be a Matter of meer Conſtraint and Neceſſity. For *let us not deceive our ſelves, God is not mock'd*, he will not accept of the World's leavings.

The ever-bleſſed God, the Fountain of all Happineſs, the chief Good of Man, the moſt excellent and deſirable Being, out of his infinite Grace and Goodneſs, from time to time calls upon us in the Miniſtry of his Word, and by his Providence, to take off our Hearts from the things of this World, and *offers himſelf* to our Acceptance, and even courts us (O, infinite Condeſcenſion!) to be happy, for ever happy, in the Enjoyment of him. Now if after all this, we ſtill cleave to the Luſts and Vanities of this World, and prefer them before God the Creator, bleſſed for ever, and that even to the laſt, till Death, is juſt ready to hale us off from the World, and we can enjoy it no longer; how can we expect, or ſo much as imagine, that God will bear this Affront at our Hands, this vile Contempt of his moſt glorious Majeſty,

or ever receive us into his Grace and Favour?

Let us therefore now, in the Day of our Health and Proſperity, in the midſt of the Enjoyments of this Life, whilſt the World ſmiles on us, and tempts us with its alluring Vanities, take off our Hearts from it, deſpiſe it, and live above it, and heartily chuſe God for our Portion, and *ſet our Affections on the things which are above.* And then we may be ſecure, we may depend upon it, that in the Day of our Diſtreſs, even in the Hour of Death, God will be our God, to ſtand by us, and to ſupport and comfort us. And the Light of his Countenance ſhall make even the *Valley of the Shadow of Death* bright and lightſome to us. And after Death, we ſhall be receiv'd into thoſe Regions of Bliſs, where we ſhall ſee and enjoy things, *that Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive.* To which bleſſed State, God of his infinite Mercy

bring us all in his due time, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour and Glory, Adoration and Worship, now and for evermore. Amen.

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SERMON IX.

What that Worthineſs is, and wherein it conſiſts, which is required of thoſe that ſhall be Partakers of the future Heavenly Glory.

The APOCALYPS or REVELATION, *Chap.* iii. the latter part of the 4th *Verſe.*

And they ſhall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

THE whole Verſe runs thus: *Thou haſt a few Names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their Garments;*

and they ſhall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

My Text is part of the Epiſtle or Letter of our Bleſſed Saviour, dictated to and ſent by St. *John* his Apoſtle, to the Angel or Biſhop of the Church of *Sardis*. Wherein our Lord ſeverely reprimands that Biſhop (and as it appears the generality of the Church, under his Government) for great Corruptions both in Doctrine and Manners, which they were guilty of *ver.* 1, 2, 3. But in the *Verſe* out of which my Text is taken, our Saviour takes notice of ſome few in that very Church, who had kept themſelves pure and free from the general and prevailing Corruptions of it: *Thou haſt a few Names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their Garments.* A few names, *i. e.* a few Perſons, ſo the word ὀνόματα, *names* is us'd *Act.* i. *ver.* 15. And in other Places of Scripture.

In the greateſt Corruptions of the Church, God's Grace always reſerves, ſome few, that retain their Integrity. Thus in *Iſaiah*'s time, when the People

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of the *Jews* were generally become ſo vile, that the Prophet ſpeaking to them and their Magiſtrates, calls them *Rulers over Sodom and People of Gomorrah*; yet even *then* God had left to himſelf a ſmall remnant of good Men, for whoſe ſake the City of *Jeruſalem*, tho' as wicked as *Sodom*, was not deſtroyed as *Sodom* was, with a final and utter Deſtruction. *Iſai.* i. *ver.* 9, 10. When the Church of the *Jews* was ſo overwhelm'd with Idolatry, that good *Elias* thought himſelf the only Man, that ſtuck to the Worſhip and Service of the true God; yet even then the Lord could tell him, *Yet I have left me ſeven thouſand in Iſrael, all the Knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every Mouth which hath not kiſſed him.* 1 Kings xix. *ver.* 18. In that exceeding numerous and populous Nation, there were but ſeven thouſand that adher'd to the God of their Fathers, juſt ſo many and not one more. In general Corruptions, when thoſe few good Men, that are left, are hid, and ſeem as it were to be loſt and ſwallowed up in the vaſt Multitude of the wicked; yet

even then, the all-ſeeing Eye of God finds them out, and not a Man of them eſcapes his gracious and favourable Notice; and as the expreſſion of our Lord, concerning thoſe few good Men in the degenerate Church of *Sardis*, imports, he knows them all by Name, *Thou haſt a few Names in Sardis, which have not defiled their Garments.* Thoſe Names the Lord ſo knew and took Notice of, as to write them in his Book of Life, for ſo it follows in the Text. *And they ſhall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.*

They ſhall walk with me ἐν λευκοῖς in *white* or bright *Garments.* As they walk'd before me in the pure and clean Garments of Sanctity and Holineſs in this Life, ſo ſhall they walk with me in bright Garments of Glory in the Life to come. *Thou haſt a few Names in Sardis, which have not defil'd their Garments, and they ſhall walk with me in white.* It is a metaphorical Expreſſion frequently uſed in this Book of the *Revelation*, to ſet forth the heavenly Glory, which

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the Saints ſhall be Partakers of in the future State. So, to look no farther, it is us'd in the *Verſe* next to my Text, *ver.* 5. *He that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be cloathed in white Raiment, and I will not blot out his Name out of the Book of Life, but will confeſs his Name before my Father, and before his Angels.*

This is the Promiſe of our Saviour to the good Men of the Church of *Sardis*, and in them, to all ſincere and faithful Chriſtians. The Reaſon of the Promiſe follows in the next words of my Text, ὅτι ἄξιοί εἰσι, *For they are worthy.* And upon this part of the Text, I ſhall inſiſt in my following Diſcourſe.

For they are worthy. Let no Man ſtartle at the Expreſſion, for to be ſure there is no hurt in it, it being the Language of the Holy Ghoſt; and when we have thoroughly inquired into it, it will be found pregnant of matter, tending very much both to the Glory of God, and the Inſtruction, yea, and Comfort too, of all ſincere Chriſtians. In the mean time, from the plain words

of

of the Text, we may venture to lay down this Propoſition, as an undoubted Truth.

There is a certain Worthineſs required in thoſe, that ſhall be Partakers of the future heavenly Glory.

The Text is expreſs, and there are many other places of Scripture, that ſpeak as expreſly to the ſame Purpoſe. So again our Saviour himſelf, *Luke* xx. *ver.* 35. οἱ καταξιωθέντες, *They who ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that World, and the Reſurrection from the Dead, neither marry, nor are given in Marriage.* And *Chap.* xxi. *ver.* 36. *Watch ye therefore and Pray,* ἵνα καταξιωθῆτε, *that ye may be accounted Worthy to eſcape theſe things which ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of Man.* So 2 *Theſ.* i. *ver.* 5. *That ye may be accounted worthy of the Kingdom of God.* Where the *Greek* word is the ſame as in the former Texts. From theſe Teſtimonies of Scripture, (to which divers others might be added) it is evident, that there is a certain worthineſs required in thoſe, that ſhall be

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Partakers of the heavenly Glory. Now my Buſineſs at preſent ſhall be carefully to enquire what this *Worthineſs* is, and wherein it conſiſts.

1. And firſt negatively, *It is not, cannot be a Worthineſs of Condignity or proper Merit, that is meant,* as the Doctors of the Church of *Rome* generally underſtand by the Texts alledg'd.

Some of theſe Men have not trembl'd to affirm, That their good Works are worthy of the heavenly Glory, in ſtrict Juſtice, without any reſpect at all to the Covenant and Promiſe of God. Others of them aſſert, That the good Works of the Regenerate being performed by the Aſſtance of the divine Spirit, bear a juſt Proportion to the heavenly Glory; and need the Promiſe of God, to make them deſerve it only upon this Account, becauſe God is not bound to accept our good Works to eternal Life, tho' they be commenſurate, and in Value equal thereunto, unleſs he bind himſelf by Agreement ſo to do: Juſt as a Man is not bound to part with a piece of Land of his

his own to another, that offers him a full Price for it, unleſs by his Conſent he makes it a Bargain; which is the general Opinion of the *Romaniſts*, and which *Bellarmin* [a] maintains, as undoubtedly *agreeable to the Decree of the Council of Trent.*

This is a horrid Doctrine, and not to be endur'd in the Church of Chriſt. Such a Worthineſs of Condignity, and proper Merit of the heavenly Glory, cannot be found in any the beſt, moſt perfect, and excellent of created Beings, much leſs in any of the Sons of fallen and ſinful Man. For what is the Worthineſs, what are the good Works of the beſt of us? Works imperfectly good, mix'd with human Frailty and Infirmity in the doing of them; interrupted with Sins of daily Incurſion, ſo that even they who can call God their Father, are in the *Lord's Prayer* taught every Day to pray for the *Forgiveneſs of their Treſpaſſes*, as duely as they pray for their *daily Bread.* And then they are the works

[a] De Juſtif. *lib.* 5. *cap.* 17.

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(ſuppoſe them never ſo perfect) of a very ſhort Life here on Earth, and that generally of a little ſcantling of that ſhort Life; moſt of us having ſinn'd, or trifl'd away the beſt and greateſt part of our Life, before we had well learned the *Art of living well*; and in that part of our Lives committed ſuch Sins, as all our After-piety, were it far greater than it is, can never of itſelf ſufficiently expiate. And after all this, we are beholden for all the Good which we do, to the free Grace of God exciting us to do it, and aſſiſting us and our Endeavours in the Doing of it; ſo that our good Works are the Gifts and Graces of God. Well, this is our Worthineſs, theſe are our good Works.

Now what is that future Glory and Happineſs we profeſs to hope for? An aſtoniſhing Happineſs, no leſs than the Viſion and everlaſting Fruition of God himſelf, bleſſed for ever. And is it poſſible for any Man, yea any Angel or created Being, by any thing that he can do, to merit ſuch a Glory as this? Is it poſſible for

the Creature to deſerve the Creator, and the everlaſting Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of him? Certainly no, nothing but the infinite Goodneſs and Condeſcenſion of God the Creator, can be aſſign'd as the Cauſe or Reaſon, why any the beſt of Creatures ſhould be advanced to ſuch an amazing Felicity and Happineſs. And as for us ſinful Men, we having by our Sins put a barr to the divine Goodneſs, nothing could (or at leaſt God had for very good Reaſons decreed that nothing ſhould) remove that barr, and make way for the free Current of his heavenly Bounty to deſcend upon us, but the meritorious Satisfaction of the Son of God, made Man, and dying for us. It is impoſſible therefore for ſo tranſcendent a Glory to fall under the Merit of the beſt of Creatures, much more of fallen and ſinful Man. And ſo much for the Negative.

2. Affirmatively, The Worthineſs required in thoſe that ſhall be Partakers of the heavenly Glory, *is only a Worthineſs of Meetneſs, Fitneſs, or due Diſpoſition*

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on to receive it; and this wrought in us by the *Grace*, and accepted through the Mercy of the *Goſpel-Covenant*, procur'd, ratify'd, and confirm'd by the meritorious Obedience and Sufferings of the Son of God, and our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. For tho' there be no juſt Proportion, but on the contrary, there muſt needs be a vaſt inconceivable Diſproportion between our good Works, and the eternal Happineſs, which God by way of Recompence beſtows on them; yet there muſt be, and is, ſome kind of Agreeableneſs and Suitableneſs between our Works and that Recompence. Our Obedience to God ought to be ſuch, as that it may have, tho' not a Merit of Condignity to deſerve everlaſting Bliſs, (that being, as I have ſhewn you, utterly impoſſible) yet an *Ordinability*, (as a great Doctor of our Church expreſſeth it) *i. e.* a Meetneſs, Fitneſs, and due Diſpoſition toward the obtaining of it. This is the manifeſt Purpoſe of the Texts alledg'd, and all others which ſpeak of any Worthineſs in

us of the heavenly Glory. And in this Senſe the word ἄξιος *worthy*, is often uſed in Scripture in other Caſes. So *Matth.* x. our Saviour ſendeth forth his Twelve Apoſtles to preach his Goſpel in the ſeveral parts of *Paleſtine*, among other Directions he gives them, this is one, *ver.* 11, 12, 13. *Into whatſoever City or Town ye ſhall enter, enquire* [b] *who in it is* worthy; *and there abide 'till ye go thence; and if the Houſe or Family be* ἀξία worthy, *let your Peace be upon it.* Where it is plain, that by *worthy* Perſons and Families, are meant ſuch as by an humble, docible Temper, and other good Inclinations were prepar'd, fitted, and diſpos'd to receive the divine Doctrines and Precepts of the Goſpel with effect.

In the ſame Senſe, as the famous *Gallican* Biſhop and Martyr *Pothinus*, in *Euſebius*[c], being ask'd by the *Roman* Preſident *Who or what the God of the Chriſtians was?* anſwer'd, [d] *If thou wert worthy*

[b] Τίς ἐν αὐτῇ ἄξιος ἐστιν.
[c] Eccl. Hiſt. *lib.* 5. *cap.* 1.
[d] Ἐὰν ἦς ἄξιος, γνώσῃ.

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thou ſhouldſt know; *i. e.* If thou wert fit to receive ſo ſublime a Myſtery, I would declare it to thee. So here, then a Man is ſaid to be worthy of the heavenly Glory, (that Glory which infinitely tranſcends the Merits of the beſt of Creatures) when he is fit, duly qualify'd, and diſpoſed to receive it from the divine Mercy; when he is ſuch as the infinite Goodneſs of God may beſtow Heaven on, ſaving the Honour of his Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs and Holineſs.

And accordingly St *Paul*, who requires from the *Theſſalonians*, in the Place before cited, that they be *counted worthy of the Kingdom of God*, explains himſelf, *Col.* i. *ver.* 12. *Giving thanks to the Father* τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ἡμᾶς, *who hath made us fit, or meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* For ſo ἱκανῶν ſignifies, as appears from 2 *Cor.* iii. *ver.* 6. where our Tranſlators indeed have it, *who hath made us able Miniſters of the New Teſtament*; but in the *Greek* it is ὃς ἱκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς, *who hath made us meet, or fit to be Miniſters of the New Teſtament.*

Thus in general you ſee that the Worthineſs required in thoſe that ſhall be Partakers of the heavenly Glory, is not a Worthineſs of Condignity or Merit, but only a Worthineſs of Meetneſs or Fitneſs for it.

Now here it muſt be farther, and more particularly inquir'd, wherein this *Worthineſs* of Meetneſs, Fitneſs, or due Diſpoſition for the heavenly Glory conſiſts, and what, in its true Notion, it comprehends? I anſwer, it comprehends theſe following *Particulars*.

1. *A ſtedfaſt Belief and Perſuaſion of the Certainty of the future Glory.* This muſt be preſuppos'd and laid as a Foundation, before we can in good earneſt ſo much as attempt any thing in Religion. For *he that cometh to God, muſt believe*, not only *that God is*, but alſo, *that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*, Hebr. xi. *ver.* 6. *A Rewarder of them*, not ſo much in this Life as in that which is to come. For here good and virtuous Men do oft-times ſuffer many and great Evils, and that upon

on the very Account of their Virtue.

Indeed ſome kind of Belief of a Life to come, hath obtain'd in all Ages and all Nations of the World, even in thoſe, which in almoſt all other reſpects have become barbarous. From whence we may juſtly conclude, that the Notion of a future State is either a Dictate of the common Reaſon of Mankind, or a part of that primitive divine Revelation, which God gave to the firſt Men, and was from them deriv'd down to all their Poſterity; or elſe that it is the Product and Effect of both. Yet perhaps this general Belief might with ſome Appearance of Reaſon have been ſuſpected as a vulgar Error, had not the Son of God himſelf come down from Heaven to atteſt it, as a very great and moſt certain Truth.

But now he hath *brought Life and Immortality* into the cleareſt *Light by his Goſpel*, wherein are many repeated, plain, and expreſs Promiſes of an inexpreſſible eternal Felicity and Happineſs, to be beſtowed on all ſuch as believe in

him, and ſincerely obey him. And theſe Promiſes which he hath made to us, he hath as it were exemplifyed and fulfill'd in himſelf, by raiſing himſelf from the *Dead*, and aſcending into the *heavenly Glory*; *that* his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion being atteſted by unexceptionable Witneſſes, who could not poſſibly (all things conſider'd) either be deceiv'd themſelves, or go about to deceive others in what they teſtifyed.

In a word, our whole Chriſtian Faith, whereof the Belief of a Life to come is a principal part, is through the ſuperabundant Goodneſs of God ſo aſcertain'd to us, by ſo very many and ſo convincing Arguments, both external in the undoubted Miracles wherewith it was confirm'd, and the aſtoniſhing way of its Propagation, and alſo internal in the very Conſtitution and Frame of the Religion itſelf, that I think it impoſſible (and I ſpeak adviſedly) for any ſound, honeſt, and unprejudic'd Mind, that hath thoroughly weigh'd and conſider'd them, to withſtand their Evidence.

So that now, if we do not firmly believe a future State, of perfect Happineſs to the *Virtuous*, and ſo on the other ſide of extreme Miſery to the *Wicked*, our Infidelity is incurable and unpardonable. That's the firſt thing which this *Worthineſs* comprehends, *a ſtedfaſt Belief and Perſuaſion of the Certainty of the future Glory.*

2. This *Worthineſs* of the *heavenly Glory* comprehends *a vigorous and lively Apprehenſion and Conſideration of its tranſcendent Worth and Excellency, compar'd with whatſoever Happineſs this preſent Life can offer in Competition with it.* The worthy Chriſtian beholding thoſe eternal Joys that are ſet before him, looks down with Contempt on all the Glories and Enjoyments of this tranſitory World, deſpiſing them as perfect Vanities.

It is not enough for us to believe the Happineſs of the Life to come, unleſs we alſo lay it in the Balance with all the ſeeming Felicities of this preſent Life, and by frequent and ſerious Conſideration both of the one and the other,

we at laſt arrive to this determinate and ſettl'd Judgment, that Heaven is infinitely to be preferr'd before this Earth, ſolid and eternal Joys before empty, temporary, and tranſient Pleaſures. This Determination one would think to be very eaſy, but alas! it is not. For tho' there can be no Diſpute, whether an eternal and everlaſting, or a temporary and tranſient Good be to be preferr'd; yet in this Caſe, the temporary Good hath this Advantage above the eternal, that the former is preſent and at hand, the other future and at a diſtance; and we are more apt to catch at any preſent and ſeeming Satisfaction of our craving Deſire after Happineſs, than to wait with Patience for a future one, tho' we cannot but think it the far greater Good. Juſt as ſome prodigal Heirs, for a little Money in Hand to ſerve their preſent extravagant Occaſions, ſell their Inheritance of a far greater Value. Or like the profane *Eſau*, who to gratify a preſent pungent, languiſhing Appetite, for a Meſs

a Mess of Pottage, parted with his Birth Right for ever.

Now there is nothing can be a more effectual Cure of this Folly and Madness of ours, than the frequent and serious Consideration, we are now discoursing of: For this would make things future to be as it were always present with us. Faith it self is an ineffectual Virtue, unless it be excited, actuated and enliven'd by this Consideration. And I am apt to think, that among those Multitudes of professed Christians, that perish everlastingly; there are as many at least, that miscarry, for want of a serious Consideration of the things they believe, as for want of the Belief it self; and that unthinking Believers take up a very great Room in the Regions of Darkness. But our worthy Christian lives in the daily Meditation of Eternity, frequently in his most serious Thoughts, comparing the future and everlasting State, with this present vanishing Life.

Thus did St. *Paul*, and he ſpeaks in the plural Number, as joining herein all true Believers together with himſelf, 2 *Cor.* iv. *ver.* 16, 17, 18. *For which Cauſe we faint not, but tho' our outward Man periſh, yet the inward Man is renewed day by day. For our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. While we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen; for the things which are ſeen are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen are eternal.* The holy Apoſtle did not only firmly believe, but alſo conſtantly eye and mind the future unſeen things, and that ſo as to compare them with the things that are ſeen, *i. e.* the things of this preſent Life, conſidering theſe as temporal, the other as eternal. And this made him to bear his Afflictions, tho' in themſelves very grievous, not only patiently, but even triumphantly, deſpiſing them, as light, trivial things, ſcarce worth the ſpeaking of, *i. e.* compar'd with the fu-

ture Happineſs, the Reward of them; the Excellency whereof, he ſeems to labour for Words to expreſs, as terming it, [f] *An inexpreſſibly, exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* A Heathen Philoſopher hath excellently compriz'd all true Practical Philoſophy in two words, [g] *bear and forbear*, bear Pain, forbear Pleaſure, *i. e.* in more Chriſtian Language, patiently endure all Afflictions which God ſends on thee, and carefully abſtain from all ſinful Pleaſures and Enjoyments which the Law of God forbids thee. Theſe are two very hard things, and indeed impoſſible to be perform'd by us, unleſs through the Grace of God, we have a conſtant reſpect to the future eternal Glory, and this indeed will make them both eaſy to us.

In a word, we ſhall never be fit for Heaven, or in God's gracious account worthy of it, till we have thoroughly learned that Leſſon, which the wiſeſt of Men, *Solomon*, inculcates on us, in

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[f] Καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης.

[g] Ἀνέχου καὶ ἀπέχου, *ſuſtine & abſtine.*

his

his excellent Book of *Eccleſiaſtes*. Wherein almoſt throughout, he admirably repreſents the perfect Vanity of all things under the Sun, and thereupon in the cloſe, *Chap.* xii. *ver.* 13. makes this inference; *Let us hear the concluſion of the whole Matter, fear God and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole Duty of Man.* Yea and his whole and entire Happineſs too. But how doth this follow? You muſt take in what is preſently added *ver.* 14. *For God ſhall bring every word into Judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* He that is fully convinc'd of theſe two things, that there is no ſolid Happineſs to be found in this World, and that there is a World to come, wherein God will adjudge Men to an everlaſting State, either of Happineſs or Miſery reſpectively, as they have made their choice and acted here, muſt neceſſarily ſubſcribe to the truth of *Solomon*'s Concluſion, that true Religion is the only way to true Happineſs.

Thus

Thus *Solomon* diſcours'd even under the Old Teſtament.

Nor is it any wonder that God's own People, even under that Diſpenſation, had ſuch an Apprehenſion of things, when we find the ſame notion in the Writings of the very Heathens. I inſtance in *Seneca*, who out of *Plato* comparing the preſent tranſient things with things future and eternal, thus excellently diſcourſeth in his 59th Epiſtle. [h] *All thoſe things which are ſubject to our Senſes, and excite and enflame our Paſſions and Affections,* Plato *will not allow to be in the Number of thoſe things, which truly are or exiſt. They are but imaginary things, carrying ſome Face and Appearance for a while. There is none of them, ſtable, ſolid or ſubſtantial. And yet we deſire them, as if they were always to be and continue, and as if we our ſelves*

[h] *Omnia iſta, quæ ſenſibus ſerviunt, quæ nos accendunt & irritant, negat* Plato *ex iis eſſe, quæ verè ſunt. Igitur iſta imaginaria ſunt, & ad tempus aliquam faciem habent. Nihil horum ſtabile nec ſolidum eſt. Et nos tamen ea cupimus tanquam aut ſemper futura, aut ſemper habituri. Mittamus animum ad illa quæ æterna ſunt. Contemnamus omnia, quæ adeò pretioſa non ſunt, ut an ſint omnino dubium ſit.*

were always to enjoy them. But let us direct our minds to things eternal; let us contemn and deſpiſe all thoſe things, which are ſo far from having any true worth in them, that it is diſputable, whether they have at all any real proper being and exiſtence. What could a Chriſtian Divine have ſaid better?

That's the ſecond thing which this *Worthineſs* comprehends, viz. *a vigorous and lively Apprehenſion and Conſideration of the tranſcendent Worth and Excellency of the heavenly Glory, compar'd with whatſoever Happineſs this Life can offer to us.*

3. This Worthineſs of the future Glory comprehends *a well weigh'd and fix'd Reſolution to part with any thing that is moſt dear to us in this World, rather than to loſe our Intereſt and Share in it.* This Reſolution depends indeed upon the former Apprehenſion; but yet it is a diſtinct thing from it, and deſerves a diſtinct Conſideration.

Now that this Reſolution, as alſo the practice of it, as occaſion is offer'd, is abſo-

abſolutely neceſſary to render us worthy, *i. e.* to qualify and fit us to be Partakers of Chriſt and his heavenly Kingdom, our Lord himſelf moſt plainly and expreſly aſſures us, *Matth* x. *ver.* 37, &c. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his Croſs and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his Life, ſhall loſe it, and he that loſeth his Life for my ſake, ſhall find it.*

Chriſt will not endure a Superiour, no nor an equal in our Hearts and Affections, he will Reign there as our Supreme and Sovereign Lord, or not at all. If our deareſt Friends or neareſt Relations, if our worldly Goods and Eſtates, if our temporal Life it ſelf be dearer to us than our *deſervedly* deareſt Saviour and Redeemer, ſo as that, when they ſtand in Competition, we chuſe to quit his Service and our Duty to him, rather than to part with them; it is moſt

certain,

certain, we ſhall be accounted utterly unworthy of him and his heavenly Kingdom. God be prais'd, tho' not very long ſince, a diſmal Cloud hung juſt over our Heads, and ſadly threatned us, yet now we are in no very near Proſpect of a time of Perſecution, wherein we ſhall be put to this Tryal.

But yet we ſhould always retain a preparation of Mind, when God calls us to it, to do or ſuffer any thing, rather than endanger our Intereſt in Chriſt, and that ineſtimable Happineſs, that is offer'd us in, with, and by him. This preparation of Mind indeed, many confident Perſons boaſt of, who are very far from it, as on the other ſide, many a ſincere and humble Chriſtian, may tremble at the Apprehenſion that he wants it, when indeed he hath it.

But by our behaviour in a peaceable, proſperous time, we may ſhrewdly gueſs, what we ſhould do in a time of Tryal. He that cannot quit a baſe vile Luſt, upon Chriſt's command, we may be

be certain will never part with his Life for Chriſt's Sake. He that cannot endure the little Severities of Mortification, will hardly ſuffer the Pains of Martyrdom. He who through an evil Conſcience, lives in a continual ſlaviſh Fear of a natural Death, will ſcarce with Courage and Reſolution meet a violent Death, tho' in never ſo good a Cauſe. He that in the abundance of the good things of this Life, cannot by the many repeated ſtrict Commands, and moſt bountiful Promiſes of our Lord, be perſuaded to expend a conſiderable Portion of his Eſtate in pious and charitable Uſes, you may be certain, if Chriſt ſhould call him to forſake all and follow him, he would turn his back upon this Call; and tho' perhaps he might, with the rich young Man in the Goſpel, go away ſorrowful, as being loath to leave his hopes of Heaven; yet go away he would, leaving Chriſt, and cleaving to the World.

In a word, no covetous, or voluptuous, or ambitious Man, can be *idoneus Audi-*

Auditor, a *fit Hearer of the Doctrine of the Croſs*; nor will either of them, whilſt ſuch, be ever able to practiſe it. But on the other ſide, the truly mortifyed Chriſtian, that is dead to this World, and lives the Life of God, that ſerves God, and doth his Duty faithfully in the time of Peace, let him not be over ſolicitous what he ſhall do in the Time of Perſecution; but let him humbly depend upon the Grace and Goodneſs of God, which will never fail him. He may comfort himſelf with the ſure Promiſe of God by St. *Paul* to all good Chriſtians, 1 *Cor.* x. *ver.* 13. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the Temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* And ſo much of the third thing which this Worthineſs comprehends, *viz. A well weigh'd and fix'd Reſolution, &c.*

4. This Worthineſs of Meetneſs, Fitneſs or due Diſpoſition for the heavenly Glory, comprehends *a deep and profound Senſe of our own utter Unworthineſs*

of

of it. A great part of our Worthiness consists in an ingenuous Confession and Acknowledgment of our Unworthiness,[1] saith a great Author upon this Subject.

We can never in God's gracious Account be worthy of the future Happiness, *i. e.* fit to receive it from God's infinite Mercy in Christ, if we think our selves worthy of it, *i. e.* in the least to merit or deserve it. No, on the contrary, the best of us, after all our best Performances, must sue for Heaven in the quality of poor, worthless, nay sinful Creatures.

We must debase our selves to the lowest Degree, and extol and magnifie the Riches of God's Grace and Mercy in Christ Jesus, who hath call'd us to the Participation of so excellent a Glory, and admits us to it upon so equitable, so easy a Condition, as that of *Faith working by Love*; which also by the assistance of his Holy Spirit, we are enabled to perform. *David* when he saw but this lower Hea-

[1] *Magna pars est dignitatis nostræ, indignitatem nostram ingenue confiteri.*

ven, with the glorious Lights that ſhine therein, and conſider'd that thoſe excellent Bodies are all ſubſervient to the Uſes of us mortal Men, that crawl on this ſpot of Earth, was wrapt into Wonder and Aſtoniſhment, as we find *Pſal.* viii. *ver.* 3, &c. *When I conſider thy Heavens, the Work of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars, which thou haſt ordain'd; what is Man, that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man, that thou viſiteſt him? For thou haſt made him a little lower than the Angels, and haſt crown'd him with Glory and Honour.* But if we could, as St. *Paul* once did, look within the Veil, into the Holy of Holies, the higheſt Heaven, the preſence Chamber of the ſupreme and univerſal King, and ſee but a glimps of the ſupertranſcendent Glories that are therein; and then reflected, that this is the Glory, to which we Clods of Earth are call'd and invited, yea and (*hear O Heaven, and give ear O Earth!*) wooed to accept; how ſhould we be even ſwallow'd up with Amazement, and if

we were able to ſpeak for wonder, how ſhould we forbear to cry out, *O infinitely good and gracious God! O moſt meritorious Saviour and Redeemer Jeſus! who when thou hadſt overcome the Sharpneſs of Death, didſt open* this *Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers!*

It is very eaſy for us to loſe our ſelves in this Speculation, and therefore I paſs from it to what remains.

5. And *laſtly*, This *Worthineſs* of the heavenly Glory comprehends, *A mighty Zeal, Induſtry, and Diligence in our Endeavour to obtain it.*

He that believes he ſhall come to Heaven without Labour and Diligence, his Belief is contrary to the very Nature and Notion of true Faith, which the divine Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* aſſures us, is to believe that *God is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*, not of ſuch as negligently and lazily ſerve him. And accordingly the ſame Author exhorts us, *not to be ſlothful, but to be Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience* (*i. e.* an un-

wearied Diligence, and Perſeverance in the Service of God,) *inherit the Promiſes.*

Indeed the *holy Scriptures* do every where inculcate and preſs on us an earneſt, vehement Study and Endeavour in the Buſineſs of our Salvation. We are commanded to *ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate*; to labour *for that Meat which endures to everlaſting Life*; to work *out our Salvation with fear and trembling*; to preſs *toward the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*; to give all Diligence, *to make our Calling and Election ſure; that ſo an Entrance may be miniſter'd to us abundantly, into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

But I ſhall inſiſt only on that one *Text*, as moſt appoſite to our preſent Purpoſe, which on another Account we have already cited out of *Luk.* xxi. *ver.* 36. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be* accounted worthy *to eſcape all theſe things which ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of Man.*

They

They are the words of our Lord himſelf, wherein he plainly ſhews us, what we muſt do if we will be accounted worthy to eſcape thoſe dreadful things, which ſhall befal the Wicked at the Day of the Univerſal Judgment; (for *that* he principally reſpects in that Chapter, and not only the Deſtruction of the wicked Jews, the Type and Shadow of it,) and to ſtand before the Judge as acquitted and abſolv'd Perſons; to ſtand at his Right Hand among thoſe holy Ones, to whom he will ſay, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepar'd for you from the Foundation of the World.* If we would be accounted through the Grace and Mercy of God in Chriſt Jeſus, worthy of this, we muſt do theſe two things, *We muſt watch*, and *we muſt pray*, and that always. *We muſt watch*, *i. e.* ſtand upon our guard, look about us, uſe all poſſible Care and Diligence to avoid thoſe Temptations to Sin wherewith we are ſurrounded; and not only ſo, but we muſt alſo watch, and carefully obſerve all Opportunities of doing

our Duty, of doing and receiving Good: Nor muſt we only watch, but alſo pray to God for his Grace, to enable us to do our Duty, and to perſevere therein.

How aptly are theſe two things joyn'd together. We muſt not preſume on the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace without our own Care and Endeavour; nor muſt we ſo rely on our own Endeavour, as not to ſee our continual need of God's Grace, without which all our Endeavours will prove vain and ineffectual. Μεριμνὴ and προσευχὴ, *Care* and *Prayer* muſt go together, and in both we muſt perſevere. We muſt *watch and pray* ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ *at all times*; *i. e.* we muſt live in the daily Exerciſe of Watchfulneſs, Care and Diligence, about the Concerns of our immortal Souls; and alſo in a conſtant Courſe of Devotion, of ſerious and moſt earneſt Prayer to God Day and Night, for his Grace to aſſiſt us; ever both looking to our ſelves, and alſo looking to God for Help. This muſt be our conſtant Employment, whilſt we live on this Earth.

And if thus we do, our Lord himſelf, who is to be our Judge, hath beforehand aſſur'd us, that *at the great Day of Tryal we ſhall be accounted worthy to ſtand before him: i. e.* We ſhall carry our Cauſe at his Tribunal, be accounted and pronounc'd righteous in his ſight, according to that Law of Grace and Mercy, which he, as our Saviour hath procur'd, ratify'd, and confirm'd with his moſt precious Blood.

This is the Worthineſs required, in thoſe that ſhall be Partakers of the future heavenly Glory. It comprehends theſe five things, 1. *A ſtedfaſt Belief and Perſuaſion of the Certainty of the future Glory.* 2. *A vigorous and lively Apprehenſion and Conſideration of its tranſcendent Worth and Excellence, compar'd with whatſoever Happineſs this preſent Life can offer in Competition with it.* 3. *A well weigh'd and fix'd Reſolution to part with any thing that is moſt dear to us in this World, rather than loſe our Shares and Intereſt therein.* 4. *A profound and deep Senſe of our own utter Unworthineſs of it.* 5. And

laſtly, *Almighty Zeal, Induſtry, and Diligence in our Endeavour to obtain it.*

APPLICATION.

Now from this Diſcourſe, (that I may briefly apply it) we cannot but ſee too much reaſon ſadly to reflect on the State and Condition of the generality of profeſſed Chriſtians. If none ſhall be Partakers of the future heavenly Glory, but ſuch as have this Worthineſs of Meetneſs, Fitneſs, and due Diſpoſition for it, how few are there among thoſe that have been baptized into the Faith of Chriſt, and profeſs their Hopes of Heaven, who can produce any colourable Claim and Title to it?

There are two ſorts of Perſons, I am ſure, that are here deeply concern'd.

1. If this be true, what will become of the notoriouſly vicious, the groſs and ſcandalous Sinner, the Drunkard, the Adulterer, the Fornicator, the common Swearer, the malicious and revengeful Perſon, the Lyar, the Extortioner, the Oppreſſor, and ſuch like? Can any of theſe

theſe Men (even in the moſt merciful Eſtimation) be thought worthy of, *i. e.* meet and fit for the heavenly Glory? Was the Kingdom of Heaven, think you, ever prepar'd, or deſign'd for ſuch as theſe? Certainly no. I need not inſiſt long on this, the Caſe is ſo plain; and therefore St. *Paul* ſeems to wonder at the ſottiſh and ſtupid Ignorance of thoſe who can imagin a vicious Life to be reconcileable with the Hopes of Heaven; 1 *Cor.* vi. *ver.* 9, 10. *Know ye not that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceiv'd; neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.* The good Lord of his Mercy open the Eyes of theſe Men, that they may ſee their wretched Condition before it be too late, and ſeaſonably take the Advice of St. *James*, *Chap.* iv. *ver.* 8, 9, 10. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you; cleanſe your Hands, ye Sinners,*

and

and purify your Hearts, ye Double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your Laughter be turned to Mourning, and your Joy to Heavineſs. Humble your ſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up.

2. This Diſcourſe diſcovers the vain Hope of the careleſs, negligent, idle, and unprofitable Chriſtian, that reſts in a negative Religion; who hath no other ground for his Hope of Heaven, but that he is no *ſcandalous Sinner*; whilſt in the mean time he hath no lively Senſe of Religion, and lives in the ordinary neglect of the manifeſt Duties of Chriſtianity, both thoſe of *Piety towards God*, and of *Charity towards his Neighbour*; who by his Careleſneſs in thoſe Matters, declares that Religion is none of his main Deſign or Buſineſs. How much a Stranger is this Man to frequent, fervent, and ſerious Prayer in private? To the diligent and daily Study of the holy Scriptures? To daily Meditation of Heaven and heavenly things? In a word, view him in the whole Courſe of his Life, and you will think

think he ſcarce in good earneſt believ'd a Life to come, or had any ſerious thoughts of his eternal State in the other World. Now ſurely the *Worthineſs* we have been diſcourſing of, implies another kind of Religion than this.

The Sum is, No Man ſhall be accounted worthy of the future heavenly Glory, but he that ſtedfaſtly believing it, doth before all things deſire it, and thinks no Labour too much to obtain it. He whoſe greateſt Care it is, how he may ſave his precious and immortal Soul, and accordingly makes Religion his *main* Buſineſs. He who watches and prays daily, and in a word, who lives a Life fruitful of good Works, *Works of Piety towards God*, and (according to his Ability) *of Charity towards Men*. This Man, and he only, tho' indeed unworthy in himſelf, yet through the rich Mercy of God, and the Merits of Chriſt, ſhall be accounted worthy of the bleſſed Immortality, to live with the holy Angels, yea with God himſelf in the *Beatifick Viſi-*

on,

on, and Fruition of him for ever and ever.

To which blessed State, God of his infinite Mercy bring us all, through his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour and Glory, Adoration and Worship, now and for ever, Amen.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM

SER-